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In Aristotelian Theory of Comedy

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AN
ARISTOTELIAN THEORY OF COMEDY
WITH AN ADAPTATION OF THE POETICS
AND A TRANSLATION OF THE
'TRACTATUS COISLINIANUS'

BY

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NEW YORK
HARCOURT, BRACE AND COMPANY

1922

PRINTED IN GERMANY
BY R. WAGNER SOHN, WEIMAR

The expense of publishing this volume was in part borne by a grant from the Heckscher Foundation for the Advancement of Research, established by August Heckscher at Cornell University.

TO
EDWARD KENNARD RAND
PROFESSOR OF LATIN IN HARVARD UNIVERSITY

PREFACE

This book has a primary aim in general, and a secondary aim in part. First of all, as a companion-volume to my 'Amplified Version' of *Aristotle On the Art of Poetry*, it is intended to be useful to the general student of literature. As the *Poetics* of Aristotle helps one to understand Greek tragedy and the epic poem, and, if employed with care, modern tragedy and the serious novel, so, it is hoped, the present volume will help college students and others to understand comedies, in particular those dramas that have in them something of the Aristophanic type; and to help in that understanding, not by an elaborate investigation of origins, and not with regard to dramatic structure (so-called) apart from the design of the comic poet to affect his audience, but directly and with reference to that design. The work is practical, then, in its aim to serve students of 'English' and the like. It is offered to the public by one who actually believes in utilizing the riches of the ancient classics for the direct benefit of contemporary life and culture. That the *Poetics* is useful—not merely interesting in historical perspective—needs no demonstration to those who have employed it with classes in the ancient and modern drama. I can only hope that my 'Aristotelian' theory of comedy may prove useful in the same way, if not in the same measure. In essential aspects, the comic drama, and especially

that of Aristophanes, is baffling to modern students. To judge from my own experience, there has hitherto been no really serviceable theory of it at the disposal of teachers of literature. And, whatever the value attaching to the rest of my book, I have at least made accessible to classes in the drama and in literary types the *Tractatus Coislinianus*, which, schematic though it be, is by all odds the most important technical treatise on comedy that has come down to us from the ancients. And modern times give us nothing of comparable worth in its field.

My practical aim in turning the usually inviolable classics to account will be an excuse, I hope, for a rather drastic manipulation of the *Poetics*. But no doubt I should apologize for this to classical scholars, since my work is also partly intended for them, and since elsewhere in my work (as here and there in the Introduction) I have had to reckon at some length with scholarly opinions that are at variance with my own. The concession to a scholarly purpose, I am aware, has brought into the volume an amount of argument and citation that does not promote the aim of direct utility to less mature students. But I could not in these days of costly printing publish two books, one for classical scholars, and the other for a more popular sort of audience; very reluctantly I omit an appendix of critical Greek passages (including the text of the *Tractatus Coislinianus*) which in more auspicious times would have formed a part of the volume. As matters stand, the teacher who wishes to do so can easily save his pupils from undue attention to historical, textual, or bibliographical minutiae; after directing them to some of the earlier sections of the Introduction, he may send them to the material taken or adapted from

Plato and Aristotle, and to the *Tractatus Coislinianus*. To the technical scholar I may say that the section called Aristotle and Aristophanes, in the Introduction, and the remarks on comic dancing and on the 'parts of *dianoia*,' included under the Tractate, are the chief novel contributions, if there are any in the volume, to special scholarship.

I have entitled the volume *An Aristotelian Theory of Comedy* for reasons suggested in the Introduction, and have indeed included everything I could find in Aristotle, in his teacher Plato, or in his successors, that might aid us in reconstructing his views on comedy. At times I have been content to gather materials for some one in the future who may be more successful in abstraction and synthesis than I, or to let them reveal their meaning without compulsion. As for the *Tractatus Coislinianus*, having throughout maintained an attitude of caution regarding its provenience, I am yet warranted by the mere frequency of its discussion by scholars in treating it as a part of the Aristotelian tradition.

The notion of bringing such materials together, and of attempting to construct a theory of comedy from them, came to me some years ago—before I had examined Bernays' *Ergänzung zu Aristoteles' Poetik*. The execution of the plan demanded a happy interval for the imaginative effort necessary to comprehend the details in a single view, and to rearrange them, duly subordinating some, and emphasizing others in an ideal outline sketch. The elaboration of the plan demanded abundant leisure. Such effort and elaboration might result either in the reconstruction of a theory once existing in the past, or perhaps in a new synthesis that would harmonize with a great tradition. Instead of

uninterrupted leisure and good spirits for this delicate work, I have experienced initial delay and constant interruption from a physical disability that prevented anything like continuous application at a desk, and latterly I have forced the labor through, during partial respites, in order to begin other tasks that have arisen, and must also, if possible, be brought to a conclusion in this fleeting life. But I must not lament over a work that has not been wholly devoid of satisfaction, beyond saying that my original scheme was more ambitious than the outcome, at least in the way of illustration. I had hoped in supplying examples to take more advantage of the fragments of Greek comedy in the collections by Meineke, Kock, and Kaibel; to make fuller use of recent scholarly work on Menander and the New Greek Comedy; and to illustrate the categories of the *Tractatus Coislinianus* more freely from these sources, from Plautus and Terence, and, in English literature, from Chaucer. As it is, I have limited myself for the most part to examples from Aristophanes, Shakespeare, and Molière. Perhaps, however, the curtailment has ended in the advantage of illustrating the principles of comedy from the greatest of the great comic poets. From this point, the neglect of Chaucer remains a disadvantage, and one that is increased because the book has a special function for students of English literature.

From the circumstances of its composition there is some overlapping in the different parts of the volume, as there is some repetition. Occasionally the overlapping and repetition were unavoidable because the same topic had to be touched on in different connections. In revising, I have not scrupled to let repetitions stand where they appeared to subserve either clearness or emphasis.

Because of the intermittent nature of my work, it is hard to give a clear account of my indebtedness to books and persons. Criticisms have reached me from various quarters, suggestions from friends and pupils, additional illustrations sometimes I know not how. I may, however, speak of my debt to Rutherford and Starkie for their valuable elucidation of the *Tractatus Coislinianus*. From the brilliant Starkie in particular I have helped myself freely to illustrative examples; I have tried to indicate this indebtedness at several points in the body of the work, but the specific references do not exhaust the account, and hence I now desire to make acknowledgment in full. At the same time I have tried to proceed independently of both Rutherford and Starkie, and of others who have studied the Tractate; here and there, I believe, the reader will see that I have continued the process of illustration to advantage, where the scholars just mentioned desisted.

My discussion of Plato and comedy, and of Aristotle and Aristophanes, I wrote before meeting with the monographs of Greene and Brentano respectively; and since reading those monographs I am not conscious of any substantial change in my remarks during the process of revision. The dissertation of Schönermarck came to my attention when my own book was ready for the printer; but it would not at any time have been of special help to me.

Finally, I must express my gratitude to several persons who were patient enough to read my manuscript in part or as a whole, and encouraged me to seek a publisher for it. In particular, I wish to thank my friend and colleague Professor Joseph Q. Adams, and Professor Carl N. Jackson of Harvard University, both

of whom have given the work the benefit of a critical examination. From both I have accepted numerous suggestions regarding small details. But as I have not in all cases been able to side with my critics, I must take full responsibility for any errors that may yet remain in the book.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
BIBLIOGRAPHY	xv
INTRODUCTION	I
I. The Investigation of Literary Types	I
II. A Lost Aristotelian Discussion of Comedy	4
III. The <i>Tractatus Coislinianus</i>	10
IV. The Nature of the Present Reconstruction	15
V. Aristotle and Aristophanes	18
VI. The Principles of the Present Reconstruction	41
VII. Fundamental Demands of Aristotle	45
VIII. The Quantitative Parts of Comedy	53
IX. The Effect of Comedy	60
X. Aristotle and Plato on Comedy	98
XI. Aristotle on Pleasure	132
XII. Scattered Passages in Aristotle with a Bearing on Comedy	140
XIII. References to Specific Comic Poets in Works other than the <i>Poetics</i>	150
XIV. References to the Comic Chorus in Works other than the <i>Poetics</i>	161
XV. Scattered Passages on Laughter	162
THE <i>POETICS</i> OF ARISTOTLE APPLIED TO COMEDY	166
THE <i>TRACTATUS COISLINIANUS</i> TRANSLATED	224
THE <i>TRACTATUS COISLINIANUS</i> AMPLIFIED AND ILLUSTRATED	227
JOHN TZETZES ON COMEDY	287
APPENDIX : THE FIFTH FORM OF ' DISCOVERY ' IN THE <i>POETICS</i>	290
INDEX	307

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[Some of the following works, more or less frequently cited in the Introduction and elsewhere, are there cited by the name of the author or editor, or by an abbreviation of the title, or by both. As my study and writing for the volume have been done at intervals over a period of years, and in various places, absolute consistency of citation has perhaps not been attained where it was otherwise possible. Moreover, the usage of editors and translators of Aristotle varies somewhat in regard to the titles of his works. The explanation of catch-titles in the Bibliography will, it is hoped, obviate all difficulty of reference.]

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[Where it has been desirable to refer very specifically to a brief passage, or to a very few words, or a single word, in the text of Aristotle, I have cited the page-, column-, and line-number of this edition of the Berlin Academy, following the custom of most subsequent editors and commentators; thus: *Poetics* 6. 1449^b21 (= chapter 6 of the *Poetics*, and page 1449, column b, line 21, in the said edition.)]

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[In course of publication, latterly (after Feb., 1913) under the editorship of W. D. Ross. In the present volume I have made frequent, but not invariable, use of the following parts, referring to the whole as the 'Oxford translation' of Aristotle.]

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- De Divinatione per Somnum*, trans. by J. I. Beare. 1908.
- De Generatione Animalium*, trans. by A. Platt. 1910.
- De Partibus Animalium*, trans. by W. Ogle. 1911.
- De Sensu et Sensibili*, trans. by J. I. Beare. 1908.
- Ethica Eudemia*, trans. by J. Solomon. 1915.
- Historia Animalium*, trans. by D. W. Thompson. 1910.
- Metaphysica*, trans. by W. D. Ross. 1908.
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[This text is hereafter sometimes referred to as the *Tractatus Coislinianus*, more commonly as the 'Tractate.' It has appeared in the following works (the list is not exhaustive), the first edition being that of Cramer, and the best either that of Kaibel or that of Kayser.]

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INTRODUCTION

So that as an imitator Sophocles will be on one side akin to Homer, since both represent higher types of character ; and on another to Aristophanes, since both represent persons as acting and doing.

Aristotle, *Poetics*, chapter 3.

I

THE INVESTIGATION OF LITERARY TYPES

An investigation into the nature of comedy falls within the province of the study of literary genera or types, a subject in which students of ancient, mediaeval, and modern literature should alike be interested. And yet not many such types have been methodically examined. We have, indeed, the masterly work of Hirzel entitled *Der Dialog* ; with which, in point of excellence, we may class Rohde's *Der Griechische Roman*, and perhaps *The New Greek Comedy* of Legrand. More speculative, not to say fanciful, is the nevertheless valuable work of Reich, *Der Mimus*, which is stimulating and not neglectful of detail, though here and there building too elaborately where the basis of fact is necessarily slender. To these we may add *Das Literarische Porträt der Griechen* by Ivo Bruns ; the *Geschichte der Autobiographie* by Misch ; and Werner's *Lyrik und Lyriker*. A few other volumes might be noted, as that of Greg on *Pastoral Drama*, and that of Anna Robeson Burr on *The Autobiography*. The list could not be greatly

extended, unless we chose to include works incidentally dealing with a literary type in order to explain some individual author or the like ; for example, Bradley's *Shakespearean Tragedy*.

In the relatively few cases where we observe no such special limitation, the investigator is likely to emphasize one of two interests. First, he will concern himself with what we may term the anatomy, the physical structure, of the literary type he has in view ; and will do so to the neglect (if we may carry on the figure) of its physiological function. That is, he will try to show us the quantitative parts that may be distinguished in a given kind of literary work, without explaining the proper effect of the whole ; and by this latter I mean the effect upon a duly qualified judge. Or, secondly, with a mind still dwelling upon formal structure, rather than proper function, he will trace the growth of the type from its known, or, more probably, from its hypothetical, beginnings in the past, in order to account for its anatomy in a later stage.

The emphasis upon structure is justified when formal dissection becomes useful to the study of function. The emphasis upon origin and growth is not astonishing in the present age, when so many scholars and men of science are dominated by a philosophy of evolution. In the time of Aristotle, certainly in Aristotle himself, a juster balance was struck between the philosophy of change and the philosophy of absolute values. If, with our well-marked interest in growth and structure, we must admit for our day a corresponding lack of interest in the end and purpose of a given type when it has reached the highest point of development we are aware of, the lack can not fail to be a source of regret, as it can not fail to injure our perspective. Not all the

works I have mentioned are equally open to the implied objection ; one is reluctant to withhold the highest praise from such admirable studies as those of Hirzel and Rohde. Nevertheless the fact remains that, whether from the past or the present, we possess, all things considered, but a single adequate investigation of a literary type with regard to form and function ; and that, too, in spite of the numerous critical works that have sprung from its loins. This is the examination of tragedy, in connection with the serious epic, by Aristotle, in the work which we know as the *Poetics*. Even his *Rhetoric*, though a more elaborate production as we have it, though generally more readable, and though the most searching analysis of human nature we have received from classical antiquity — even his *Rhetoric*, though still the best work of its kind, may be thought, if not inferior, to be more obviously and directly utilitarian in its aim. The *Poetics*, fragmentary though it be, or at all events in some sort an epitome, is scientific in the best sense of the word, while remaining practical, too. There were critics in the Renaissance (not in the Middle Ages) who deemed it infallible. Infallible it is not in all details ; yet for method and perspective it never has been equaled in its field. With justice, therefore, Alfred Croiset, after contrasting the dogmatism of a Scaliger or a Boileau with the perspective of that Aristotle whom they regard as a master-critic, observes :

‘ Of late, certain scholars [as Mahaffy], perhaps through a natural reaction against the former idolatry long accorded to the *Poetics*, have seemed to take pleasure in depreciating the work. This new exaggeration is not more reasonable than the other. The *Poetics* is a masterpiece, in which the fundamental traits of Greek poetry, considered in its evolution as

well as in its essence, are noted with a precision that gives the work a value well-nigh eternal.¹

However, the work as we have it touches upon lyrical poetry only in so far as this is involved in a discussion of the dramatic chorus, and of the musical element in the drama; and it touches upon comedy either in an incidental way, or, otherwise, by implication only.

II

A LOST ARISTOTELIAN DISCUSSION OF COMEDY

It is generally believed that Aristotle included in his writings or lectures a systematic treatment of comedy; so far as I have read, the belief has never been seriously questioned, unless by McMahon.² Nor do I intend to do more than raise the question; though so long as no clearly authentic work nor any distinct part of one, treating of this genus and attributable by a good tradition to Aristotle, is known to exist, there is always the possibility that he did not systematically deal with the subject — save by implication in our *Poetics*. He might, conceivably, have found that the emotions of laughter defied analysis. Or, having dealt with comedy in his lectures, he might have left no record of his discussion even in the shape of notes; and it might be that no student of his had made any record of a lecture or lectures, or that all such records had quickly perished. But evidence in the *Poetics*, references in his other works, evidence in other writers

¹ Alfred and Maurice Croiset, *Hist. Lit. Grecque* 4. 739-40.

² E. g., McMahon. p. 28; but see *ibid.*, p. 44.

who refer to him, and general probability, favor the view that he discussed the subject in more than passing fashion in a written record.

It is generally agreed that the loss of any discussion of comedy by Aristotle is a very serious one to students of literature. Bywater holds that the analysis appeared in Book 2 of a work in which the extant *Poetics* constituted Book 1; he says:

‘Although Book 2 is now lost, there are indications in Aristotle himself which may give us some idea of the ground it must have covered. It may be taken to have comprised (1) the discussion on comedy promised in *Poetics* 6. 1449^b21, and (2) the *catharsis* theory to which reference is made in *Politics* 8. 7. 1341^b32.¹ What we are told in more than one passage in the *Rhetoric*² is enough to show that τὰ γελοῖα, the appointed subject of comedy, must have been considered and examined with the same analytical care as in the treatment of τὰ φοβερά καὶ ἐλκενία in the surviving theory of tragedy. And if his theory of comedy was on much the same lines as that of tragedy, Aristotle must have had something to say on the μῦθοι of comedy, and also on the ἥθοις and λέξεις of the comic personages. The strange expression, . . . τὸ δὲ πάντων κοινότατον,³ may perhaps have been in its original setting an illustration of the possibilities in the way of diction in comedy. As for the *catharsis* theory, the only place we can imagine for it would be, as Vahlen (*Aristotelische Aufsätze* 3, p. 10) has seen, at the end of Book 2. In such a position it would come in naturally enough, as a final word on the whole subject of the drama, justifying the existence of both tragedy and comedy in reply to the polemic of Plato in the *Republic*. The discussion itself can hardly have been a brief one. The

¹ See below, p. 130.

² See below, pp. 123, 138-40.

³ See below, p. 150.

erkennen, den er doch niemals gesehen, so war die Annahme, er werde diesen (wirklich) wiedererkennen, ein Fehlschluss.'

The Arabic version evidently warrants an interpretation different from that of Bywater; at this point there must have been a notable difference between the Greek text that lay behind that and the Syriac version, on the one hand, and *ms. Parisinus 1741*, on the other. To me, there are great difficulties in Gudeman's rendering of the passage, but I have no means of removing them. Very likely they will be explained when Gudeman publishes his critical edition of the *Poetics*. If not, then I should like to suggest the possibility of an early textual corruption. May it be that Aristotle really spoke, not of the bow (τόξον) of *Odyssey* 21. 11, etc., but of the nuptial bed (λέχος) of *Odyssey* 23. 177 ff., a description of which enters into Odysseus' revelation of himself to Penelope? The hero is still in the garb of a beggar. He finally identifies himself to her by a circumstantial account of the bed — which as Beggar he had not seen. 'A great token,' he says, 'is worked into the elaborate bed; it was I that laboriously wrought this, and no other' (τὸ δ' ἐγὼ κάμειν οὐδέ τις ἄλλος). His minute description, which he could give if he were her husband, leads her, not to the legitimate inference that he *might* be so, but that he *must* be. He adds the B, and she infers the A. The 'discovery' is of the fifth or 'synthetic' sort. The author of the lay, which could still be called *Odysseus with the False Tidings*, has here 'poetized a paralogism.']

There is nothing morally objectionable in employing this kind of 'discovery.' It is not the best kind, for that grows out of the incidents of the plot; but if the poet wishes to represent a character producing a false

recognition, let the device be used in the proper way — ὥς δεῖ. You must mention the false A, but not dwell upon it. You must put in the B, and, as Homer makes the Beggar do in describing the garments to Penelope, you must keep on adding to the description. In spite of By water's warning that 'it is idle to speculate further as to the way in which the actual Discovery may have been worked out' in *Odysseus with the False Tidings*, it is tempting to think of this poem or lay in connection with Book 19 or Book 23 of the *Odyssey*. If, however, the story is not Homeric, one could imagine the hero appearing in disguise, and then proving his identity by a detailed description of his ancient bow, or perhaps offering to pick out this weapon from a number of others, and thus imposing on the guileless.

Some of these thoughts were evidently in my mind when my 'Amplified Version' was published. But since then the whole question of the 'synthetic' or 'concocted discovery' has become more intelligible to me through the observation of actual instances of the device in literature. Aristotle was simply dealing with observed facts, so that when a point in his conception of the drama or of epic poetry is obscure, the best way of illuminating it is, not to theorize immoderately on his text, but to compare what he says with the practice of poets. Every one of his kinds of 'discovery' can be illustrated from Homer. How could it be otherwise in view of the allusion in the *Poetics* to ἀναγνώρισις in the *Odyssey*? But I have hit upon two very apt examples from the Biblical account of Joseph and his brethren, a tale that might be described in Aristotle's words as 'a complex story — there is "discovery" throughout, — and one of character.'

Thus (Gen. 37. 31-3):

subject was too large and too controversial to be disposed of in some one or two short chapters.¹

With these bold conjectures of an ordinarily cautious scholar we may compare the assurance of Rutherford, who believes that the *Tractatus Coislinianus*² represents a lost section of the *Poetics* :

‘ It is not that the laughter of comedy had not been properly analyzed. Even the scrimp and grudging abstract, now sole relic of the section in the *Poetics* concerned with comedy, will convince anybody who keeps it in his head as he listens to Greek comic πρόσωπα [the personages of Aristophanes] that a Greek had indeed read for Greeks the most secret heart of “ the mother of comedy,” and, probe in hand, had made clear wherefore it beat, and what it was made of — unconventionality, spite, malice, impudence, devilment, ribaldry, whimsicality, extravagance, insincerity, non-sensicalness, inconsequence, equivocate, drivel, pun, parody, incongruity in all sorts and sizes. But Aristotle thought too much, and was too great an observer, to be loved by commentator and rhetor.’³

Or again, take Starkie :

‘ The loss that literature has sustained through the disappearance of the chapters of the *Poetic* of Aristotle dealing with comedy can be estimated from a study of the *Tractatus*, which Cramer edited, from the *Codex Coisli[ni]anus*, more than a half-century ago.’⁴

Of late there has appeared an able destructive argument by McMahon⁵ to the effect that there never was a second book of the *Poetics* ; but the argument does not minimize the loss of an Aristotelian treatment of comedy, if Aristotle produced one :

¹ Bywater, p. xxiii

² See below, pp 224-6

³ Rutherford, p. 435.

⁴ Starkie, *Acharmans*, p xxxviii. Starkie published in 1909, Cramer in 1839.

⁵ See especially McMahon, p. 36.

‘ Since the Renaissance any treatment of Aristotle’s *Poetics* has discussed and lamented the loss of a second book. Because this book . . . is supposed to have contained a theory of comedy, its loss, measured by the value of the Aristotelian theory of tragedy, is incalculable.’¹

The objections brought by McMahon against the existence of a second book, while they reveal a bias toward destructive criticism,² are on the whole fairly convincing, and we may accept his guarded conclusion :

‘ While we are, by the conditions of the problem, prevented from making a categorical denial, we can, I feel sure, assert that sufficient reason can not be shown to warrant the belief that such a book ever existed.’³

But the question seems to be one of no great importance. The present division of other works of Aristotle into ‘ books ’ need not be, in some cases can not be, ascribed to the author himself, and may have been effected long after his time ; witness the *Metaphysics* and the *Nicomachean* and *Eudemian Ethics*. We see the same sort of thing in the works of Plato : only a very mechanical editor would end Book 2 of the *Republic* in the midst of the discussion of poetry. But the belief that no editor ever divided the *Poetics* into ‘ books ’ would not compel us to deny that Aristotle ever wrote on comedy in a more definite way than we observe in the extant treatise. Nor would the doubt McMahon, following Shute, has thrown on the authen-

¹ McMahon, p. 1.

² See his unduly sceptical attitude (McMahon, p. 35) to the credibility of the Anti-Atticist.

³ McMahon, p. 9. His argument is so condensed, and his citations of the evidence, and of other scholars who have dealt with it, are so full, that I can not attempt to give an abstract, but must refer the student to the article itself ; see the Bibliography, above, p. xx.

ticity of the references from other works of Aristotle to this¹ justify one in holding that the treatise now contains all it ever contained on the subject. Take, for example, the statement in *Rhetoric* 1. 11 that the forms of the ludicrous have been analyzed in the *Poetics*,² and the still more specific assertion in *Rhetoric* 3. 18 that they have been enumerated in the *Poetics*.³ On the law of chances, there being six references from the *Rhetoric* to the *Poetics*, one of these two might have come from the author himself, and the other from a subsequent editor — though the second is built into the substance of a connected passage. The most unlikely assumption is that Aristotle made none of the 'cross-references' to be found in works so intimately related in subject as the *Rhetoric* and the *Poetics*. But on any assumption short of universal incredulity we must contend that one person, or more than one, familiar with at least two of the writings of Aristotle, interested in *Rhetoric*, and interested in the ludicrous, was aware of a schematic treatment of the ludicrous not then or now found in the *Rhetoric*, and not now found in our *Poetics*, but then found in a work with some such title as the latter. There might have been a confusion of the *Poetics* with Aristotle's dialogue *On Poets*; but the most natural explanation is that the *Poetics* once included an explicit inquiry into the sources of comic effect — something analogous to, or possibly in essentials identical with, the analysis of the sources of laughter in the *Tractatus Coislinianus*.⁴

That explanation does not require the hypothesis of a second book of the *Poetics*. This treatise has certain

¹ McMahon, pp. 17-21.

² See below, p. 123.

³ See below, p. 138.

⁴ See below, pp. 224-5, 229-59

characteristics, but not all, of a rounded whole. The outline, which is excellent, is at times worked out with care, and at times has the look of notes made in advance by a lecturer, or during the lecture by one of the audience, or again, of an abstract from a dialogue.¹ Or the general effect may be likened to that of an uneven abstract taken from the major part of a longer book and belonging to a later period. The scheme is elastic enough to admit of expansions by the original author in the substance, even of insertions of new but germane material. Some such outline could have served Aristotle in his teaching throughout a number of years. Whatever the history of the work, what we now have is more likely to be a reduction than an extension of his oral treatment of the subject. In comparison with several other works of the same author — with the *Constitution of Athens*, or the *Nicomachean Ethics*, or the *Politics*, or the first two parts of the *Rhetoric* — we can hardly grant that the extant *Poetics* constitutes a finished essay, duly revised for publication. The *Politics*, though the end is missing, is far more like one.

Meanwhile, since the question of books or parts has been raised, we may note that the cleavage between Books 1 and 2 of the *Poetics*, supposing that there were two 'books,' need not have appeared at the close of the present treatise; it might come before that — for example, between chapters 22 and 23. In other words, if the work was originally longer than it is now, if it underwent compression throughout, but more toward the end than in the earlier sections, and if something has been lost at the end, still, granting for the moment that there once were two 'books,' it would not be

¹ See my 'Amplified Version,' pp. v, xxvi-xxviii.

necessary to suppose that all of the second had been lost. At all events, it would not be out of keeping with the scheme of our *Poetics* if to the four sections into which it now readily divides¹ there were added a fifth, consisting of remarks on comedy, and related in various ways to what went before.

But the mechanical division of Aristotle's works is a question of secondary importance. It is obvious that a theory of comedy, if the author elaborated one, would be associated in his mind, and in the minds of his pupils and editors, with his sketch of tragedy and epic poetry, even though such a theory, whenever produced, had no more organic connection with the main work than the third book of the *Rhetoric* has with the first two.

III

THE *TRACTATUS COISLINIANUS*

We turn now to the strange fragment or condensation of a theory of comedy known as the *Tractatus Coislinianus*, to which I shall not seldom refer as the 'Tractate'; its obvious relation to the *Poetics* of Aristotle was noticed by Cramer, who first printed it, in the year 1839,² from a manuscript of the tenth century, No. 120 in the De Coislin collection at Paris. A better transcript of the manuscript was utilized by Bernays for his *Ergänzung zu Aristoteles' Poetik* (1853, 1880),³ and the text has been several times reprinted, as by

¹ Bywater, p. xvii, distinguishes five sections: chaps. 1-5, 6-22, 23-4, 25, 26. I include chaps. 25-6 under one head, that of problems in criticism and their solutions.

² Cramer 1. 403-6.

³ Bernays, *Zwei Abhandlungen*, 1880, pp. 133-86.

Vahlen¹ and by Rutherford,² the best editions being that of Kaibel (1899) in the only part issued of his *Comicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*³ and that of Kayser (1906)⁴ in *De Veterum Arte Poetica Quaestiones Selectae*. Perhaps through a reaction from the effervescent style of Rutherford,⁵ but mainly in order to strengthen his case against a second book of the *Poetics*, McMahon goes far in depreciating the significance of the fragment.⁶ On the other hand, Kayser, the results of whose study of the Tractate McMahon deems 'the most credible of all,' but whom he does not quote, declares that, 'Of the ancient commentaries dealing with Greek comedy, as no one will fail to perceive, the most valuable for an investigation into the history of the art of poetry is the "*Tractatus Coislinianus*.'" ⁷ Condensed, then, though the fragment is, among the vestiges of a theory of comedy that have come down to us in the Greek tradition (aside from the *Poetics* of Aristotle and the *Philebus* of Plato) it is, not merely for historical purposes, but in itself, by far the most important. The antiquity of the original source for various parts of it is reasonably clear. Perhaps we may grant that the treatise shows 'several different strata in its development to its present state' ⁸; that it betrays the hand, now of an industrious and faithful student of Aristotle, now of a less intelligent imitator determined at all

¹ In Vahlen's third ed. (1885) of the *Poetics*, pp. 78-80.

² Rutherford, pp. 436-7.

³ Kaibel, pp. 50-3.

⁴ Kayser, pp. 6-8.

⁵ See above, p. 6.

⁶ McMahon, pp. 27, 29-34.

⁷ Kayser, p. 5: 'Commentariorum veterum, qui sunt de comodia Graeca, plurimum valere ad artis poeticae historiam investigandam tractatum illum qui vocatur Coislinianus nemo erit quin intellegat.'

⁸ McMahon, p. 27.

costs to bring his work into line with the doctrine or the terms of the *Poetics*; and that the definition of comedy seems to merit the censure passed on it by Bernays and Bywater.¹ Nevertheless, from the very nature of the fragment — from the fact that it is a fragment or abstract, — every one of these three concessions may be questioned. That tragedy has ‘grief’ for its ‘mother,’ and that comedy has ‘laughter’ for *its* ‘mother,’ — as the Tractate informs us — (seem to be very un-Aristotelian conceptions.) Yet they may be old; and, besides, we know nothing of the kind of utterances Aristotle put into the mouths of the speakers other than himself in his dialogues. The division of comedy into ‘Old,’ ‘New,’ and ‘Middle,’ has been thought to be manifestly post-Aristotelian. Of the division of poetry into ‘mimetic’ and ‘non-mimetic’ we can not with certainty affirm as much.² It contradicts one of the central doctrines of the *Poetics*, that a man is a poet only in so far as he is ‘mimetic’ — in so far as he keeps himself out of his poem and ‘imitates’ his object, ‘men in action.’ But there are discrepancies just as glaring within the extant *Poetics*; ³ indeed, even in that work Aristotle recognizes, in addition to the properly dramatic genius who keeps his own sentiments in abeyance, the enthusiastic poet who gives way to his own welling emotions.⁴ Of this kind, it may be, in his view, was Solon, whose ‘poems’ and ‘poetry’ he repeatedly quotes in the *Constitution of Athens*,⁵ and whom he cites in the *Politics* and *Rhetoric* as one

¹ Bernays, p. 145; Bywater, p. xxii. But see below, pp. 60-77; and see also Kayser, p. 31.

² For all these allusions, see below, pp. 224-8.

³ See my ‘Amplified Version,’ pp. xxvi-xxviii.

⁴ *Poetics* 17; see my ‘Amplified Version,’ p. 58.

⁵ Ed. by Sandys (1912), 5. 14 (p. 20), 12. 2 (p. 43).

who had written poetry (ποίησας, ἐποίησε).¹ And it will be recalled that Aristotle's own verse is of the non-mimetic description ;² in his well-known scolion, for example, he does not 'imitate' the thoughts of some fictitious personage, but sounds the praise of virtue in his own way. Again, the argument against the Tractate — that it is un-Aristotelian, — on the ground that certain technical terms are not there used in the same sense as in the *Rhetoric*, is hardly valid, since the *Rhetoric* is not a treatise on comedy. Some are so used, and some are not. Within the limits of a single work, in the *Poetics*, for example, Aristotle does not always use a given term twice in the same way.³ But I make no point of defending the Tractate on the ground that any large share of it is very original. In it the hand of an unskilful adapter may have levied upon an earlier, more ample source, or more than one source ; what he had before him may have been an intermediate compilation lying between him and Aristotle or Theophrastus or some later critic.

Parts of it may not ultimately derive from Aristotle ; others may show an unintelligent use of the *Poetics*, or else a badly-mangled tradition. But if in others there is a combination of materials from the *Poetics*, *Rhetoric*, and *Ethics*, the adaptation has been made with skill. When all possible objections have been urged against the fragment, there remain certain elements in it that, we may contend, preserve, if not an original Aristotelian, at all events an early Peripatetic, tradition. If I may speak for myself, a study of the 'parts of *dianoia*'

¹ *Politics* 1. 8. 1256^b33 ; *Rhetoric* 1. 15. 1375^b34.

² Aristotle, *Fragmenta*, ed. by Rose (1886), 671-5 (X. *Carmina*, pp. 421-3 ; compare *arg.* 676 (*ibid.*, p. 424).

³ See below, pp. 54-5

has greatly increased my respect for the Tractate.¹ And, to come back to the list of the sources of comic effect: however bald in its present shape, it betrays the workings of a powerful mind anterior to the age of the epitomator. Something might be said for the attribution of this list, and the 'parts of *dianoia*,' (possibly with other analyses and observations such as the differentiation of comic 'character') to Theophrastus, a pupil of Aristotle, and his successor as head of the Peripatetic school; that is, if the significant parts of the Tractate do not by some road go back either to a *Poetics* of Aristotle more complete than ours, or to his dialogue *On Poets*.² It is this very list that, as we saw,³ most fully satisfies the references from the *Rhetoric* to an enumeration of the species of laughter in some work on poetry. And it is this list, the most valuable part of the fragment, against which the destructive critics have had least to say. Kayser, who has studied several items in the list, but pays no attention to the 'parts of *dianoia*,' wishes, however, to assign the original source of the Tractate to a date not earlier than the first century B. C., assuming the existence of a work on poetry from which not only the epitomator or excerptor of the fragment, but other authors as well, drew their materials,⁴ and arguing from the appearance of technical terms in a sense too late for the time of Aristotle. It may be seen that some of the terms describing the parts of comic *dianoia* may have been used in a technical sense before the time of Aristotle,⁵ so that perhaps the whole question should be reopened.

¹ See below, pp. 265-81.

² McMahon, pp. 27, 43-4.

³ See above, p. 8.

⁴ Kayser, p. 44.

⁵ See below, pp. 265-80.

But speculation regarding the early history of the *Poetics* (with its relation to the dialogue *On Poets*), and of the Tractate, is well-nigh futile. Of greater significance is the actual correlation of the Tractate, effected by Bernays, by Rutherford, and above all by Starkie, with the thought of Aristotle and the phenomena of ancient comedy. Through constructive effort, the fragment serves to explain Greek comedy in the same way, if not to the same extent, as the *Poetics* has served to explain Greek tragedy and the epic. By a systematic application of the *Poetics* to Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, the thought of the treatise is seen to be fundamental; general truth and specific example mutually corroborate and delimit each other; and, with care, the application may be extended to modern literature, even to other types than were known to Aristotle. Similarly, the Tractate may be applied, as has been done by Rutherford and Starkie, to Aristophanes, to Shakespearean comedy, and to Molière. The work of Starkie, and I believe my own on the 'parts of *dianoia*,' will show that in certain essentials the Tractate has the universal quality we ascribe to the generalizations of the *Poetics*.¹

IV

THE NATURE OF THE PRESENT
RECONSTRUCTION

In his *Ergänzung zu Aristoteles' Poetik*, Bernays has attempted to reconstruct the Aristotelian theory of

¹ Starkie, *Acharmans*, pp. xxxviii-lxxiv; see also his article on Aristophanes, Rabelais, Shakespeare, and Molière, in *Hermathena* 42. 26-51, and his article in *A Book of Homage to Shakespeare*, ed. by Gollancz, pp. 212-26.

comedy from the *Tractatus Coislinianus*. He takes the Tractate as his basis. Accepting the fragment as ultimately deriving from Aristotle, he aims simply to explain and correct this in the light of other Aristotelian works, including the *Rhetoric* and *Nicomachean Ethics*, but especially, of course, the *Poetics*. He rightly assumes that we must guard at every point against false additions and mistakes of the epitomator — or, as may now be said, against a corrupt tradition in general, if, to quote more fully the statement of McMahon,¹ ‘this treatise, manifestly of Peripatetic origin,’ gives evidence of ‘several different strata in its development to its present state.’ The ingenuity and learning of Bernays as a pioneer in evaluating the Tractate are on a level with his merit as an interpreter of the *Poetics*; and if a stratum of the fragment be Aristotelian, it might seem that in a constructive way he left little to be done, apart from the illustrative work of Rutherford and Starkie. Nevertheless at two cardinal points he falls short. First, notwithstanding the frequency of reference to the Old Comedy in the Aristotelian *Didascaliae*,² and the indications that the work of the scholiasts on Aristophanes had its original impulse from Aristotle; notwithstanding the use by the scholiasts, in commenting on this poet, of categories similar to those of the Tractate; and notwithstanding the vital character of the first reference to Aristophanes in the *Poetics*,³ Bernays thinks that Aristotle underrated the Aristophanic drama in comparison with a later type verging on the New Comedy. Now it is one of my assumptions that Aristotle would include

¹ McMahon, p. 27; see above, p. 11.

² See below, pp. 156-9.

³ See below, p. 172.

more than one type of comedy in his survey, and that he could not possibly exclude Aristophanes; to the evidence for this view I shall later return.¹ Secondly, Bernays, making use of the few direct references to comedy in the *Poetics* as a supplement to the Tractate, subordinates the *Poetics* to the Tractate. But I subordinate the Tractate to the *Poetics*. To me, whatever the authenticity of the Tractate, by far the greater part of an Aristotelian theory of comedy is to be found in the *Poetics* itself; to some extent, of course, in the direct references, since their value can hardly be overestimated; but also implicitly in the main conceptions of the work as a whole, and, throughout the work, in many details of the discussion of tragedy. The inference can hardly be challenged, if the two kinds of drama were as intimately related in the mind of Aristotle as they were in their actual existence.²

And hence I contend that, with a slight shift, which can be made in the light of the direct references, or in the light of similar references in the *Rhetoric* and other works of Aristotle, the *Poetics* can be metamorphosed into a treatise on comedy; whereupon the authentic elements (if such there be) of the *Tractatus Coislinianus* become an addendum, very significant in any case, but subordinate to the main Aristotelian theory of comedy, and improperly estimated unless viewed in a perspective of the whole. In such a perspective, the

¹ See below, pp. 19-41.

² Compare Croiset, *Hist. Lit. Grecque* 3. 424-5: 'L'histoire de la comédie en Grèce est plus intimement liée que nulle part ailleurs à celle de la tragédie. Non seulement, comme partout, ces deux genres ont cohabité sur les mêmes scènes et ont exercé l'un sur l'autre une influence constante, mais de plus, issus du même culte, animés de la même inspiration religieuse, ils ont jusqu'à la fin servi et honoré le même Dieu. Au même titre que la tragédie, la comédie grecque est essentiellement dionysiaque.'

categories of the ludicrous in the Tractate, whether they proceed from Aristotle himself, or were merely produced under his influence, fall into line as a part of a rational and helpful method in the study of the drama.

Of course I do not wish to imply, either here or elsewhere, that Aristotle's theory can thus be fully recovered;¹ or indeed that it could be otherwise truly restored than by the reappearance of a more complete work in manuscript. For example, if the notion of catharsis really had for him the interest commonly supposed, we certainly can not reproduce what he may have said or thought of it in regard to comedy; his views on the emotional effect of comedy must remain partly conjectural. Still, many other positive results can be obtained, and yet more can be fairly inferred.

V

ARISTOTLE AND ARISTOPHANES

Before going further in our reconstruction, we must open a question regarding the sort of examples Aristotle would use in illustration of his theory. As in the case of tragedy and epic poetry, his generalizations would have been abstracted from the works of comic poets, while doubtless transcending the practice of any one author.

First, then, we must take issue with Meineke, Bernays, and such as have followed them in contending that Aristotle would underrate Aristophanes. Thus,

¹ Let this be my general warning, so that the reader may be spared the constant repetition of qualifying phrases in what follows; there are enough of them as it is.

according to Butcher: 'It is doubtful whether Aristotle had any perception of the genius and imaginative power of Aristophanes.'¹

Bywater is more cautious, but tends to a similar conclusion: 'If his theory of comedy had come down to us, we should probably find it more applicable to the New Comedy than to that of Aristophanes.'² And Bernays thinks it probable 'from all we know of Aristotle that he regarded the innuendo of the Middle Comedy as the correct method in general.'³ The opinion mainly rests on a passage in the *Nicomachean Ethics*,⁴ where the propriety of obscene or abusive wit is discussed in relation, not to the stage, but to the habitual conduct of the individual, the subject-matter of Ethics. It rests also to some extent on a statement in the *Politics*,⁵ bearing upon the education of youth, one of the main considerations in this science. The opinion can not be supported by any utterance of Aristotle in the *Poetics*, where, on the contrary, we find it distinctly maintained that the standard of propriety in the conduct of fictitious characters in poetry is different from the standard of conduct for the individual in his private life (according to the ideals of Ethics), or for men in their communal activities and their relations to the State (according to the ideals of Politics). He mentions Politics in particular, but the term really is a general one, embracing both communal and individual rights and duties. The standard of conduct in poetry, says Aristotle, is different from the standard of correctness in Politics or any other field of investi-

¹ Butcher, p. 380.

² Bywater, p. ix; cf. *ibid.*, p. 190.

³ Bernays, p. 150; see below, pp. 259-60.

⁴ See below, p. 120.

⁵ See below, p. 125.

gation.¹ Thus, whereas in the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle advises men to be perfect, in the *Poetics* he lets us see that the comic poet should represent men as no better, but rather worse, than the average.²

In other words, the propriety of the sentiments and utterances of dramatic characters, like the propriety of the action as a whole, in a comedy of Aristophanes or of any other poet, is to be judged, not first of all by what is fitting in actual life, public or private, but by a rule of art. With this, the supposed radical objection of Aristotle to Aristophanes upon ethical grounds, because of the obscene features in the Old Comedy, instantly disappears.³ Moreover, the *Poetics* frankly recognizes the origin of comedy in the phallic procession and dance, without the least indication of censure.⁴ To the mime, in which modern authorities find the other chief source of the genus, Aristotle alludes in connection with the Dialogues of Plato; we may suppose that he thought well of the mime, which was sometimes more decent than Aristophanes, sometimes far less.

Aristotle's main objection to Aristophanes, however, is supposed to have arisen from the fact that the Old Comedy indulged in free personal abuse of individuals; whereas poetry tends to represent the universal—in concrete form, to be sure. As the point is involved in an understanding of the *Poetics* itself (and not of another work like the *Ethics* or *Politics*), I return to it when we come

¹ *Poetics* 25. 1460b¹³⁻¹⁵; see below, p. 218.

² *Ibid.* 2. 1448a¹⁻¹⁸, 5. 1449a³²⁻⁴; see below, pp. 169-70, 176. Compare also *Poetics* 25. 1461a⁴⁻⁹; see below, p. 219.

³ Compare Brentano, p. 44: 'Die Frage nach dem künstlerischen Werth der alten Komödie hat mit dieser ethischen Verurtheilung schlechterdings nichts zu schaffen.' My judgment regarding Aristotle's probable estimate of Aristophanes was reached and formulated before I knew of the convincing *Programm* by Brentano, whose argument in more than one detail coincides with mine.

⁴ See below, p. 176.

to the passages in their actual setting.¹ But here we may note, first of all, that Aristotle nowhere — neither in the *Poetics* nor elsewhere in his extant works — objects to Aristophanes for his ludicrous treatment of Euripides, Aeschylus, Socrates, or any one else. In fact, throughout the writings of Aristotle there is no censure of Aristophanes in any way, shape, or form; just as there is none of Plato for his use of a kind of generalized ‘Socrates,’ often comic, in his Dialogues. To suppose that the critic must have condemned the poet for insufficient generalization of his comic material is pure inference. Upon what grounds is the inference based?

Mainly upon the notion that Aristophanes may be included with the old ‘iambic poets’ (who devoted themselves to personal invective) mentioned in *Poetics* 9.1451^b14.² But in the first reference to this class of poets, in *Poetics* 4.1448^b33–4, Aristotle is thinking, not of dramatists, but of more ancient authors, in particular, it may be supposed, Archilochus,³ and of mordant personal diatribes; these authors apparently belong to the age of Homer, according to the method of reference in the *Poetics*. Aristotle has in mind such things as the iambic poem of Archilochus in which the jilted bard attacked the whole family of Lycambes, accusing the father of perjury and his daughters of abandoned lives. And in this second instance (9.1451^b 14) he is thinking of poets, probably dramatists, but possibly not, anterior to Crates,⁴ who had become eminent by B. C. 450, and died (?) before B. C. 424. Aris-

¹ See below, pp. 192–3, 259–60.

² See below, p. 192.

³ See Bywater, p. 130; cf. Aristotle's *Rhetoric* 2. 23.

⁴ See below, pp. 177–8.

tophanes was born in B. C. 445/4, the generally accepted date, or perhaps ten years earlier; according to Kent, he died in B. C. 375 or later.¹ He can not have seemed like a very ancient author to Aristotle (born B. C. 384), who says in *Poetics* 4.1449^b1-2 that the archon did not grant a chorus to comedy until late in its history; and it is held that the archon first granted a chorus to comedy in B. C. 487 (Capps) or about B. C. 465 (Bywater).² Sixty, or not less than forty, years after this 'late date' occurred the first presentation of a comedy by Aristophanes; over one hundred years after B. C. 487 occurred the last we know of in his lifetime³ — possibly when Aristotle was about ten years old. In B. C. 340/39, when Aristotle was at the height of his powers, there is an indication of a revival of interest at Athens in the comedy of a time preceding;⁴ whenever the *Poetics* was written, we can see from the reference in it to Aristophanes that he was then considered the outstanding poet of his class. It is hard to think of any one describing the most fertile and varied metrist of antiquity as a mere 'iambist'; but in any case the later plays of Aristophanes — for example, the revised *Plutus* — could not by any stretch of imagination be included among the works of 'the old iambic poets' who vented their spleen in direct abuse of persons. Nor is there reason to suppose that the earlier *Plutus* (B. C. 408)

¹ Roland G. Kent, *When did Aristophanes Die?* in *The Classical Review* 20 (1906). 153-5; cf. *ibid.* 19 (1905). 153-5.

² Haigh, p. 20, gives the date as fixed by Capps, B. C. 487; Bywater, p. 142, citing Wilamowitz, says 'probably about B. C. 465'; Cornford, p. 215, accepts B. C. 487; Flickinger, *The Greek Theater and its Drama*, p. 135, gives B. C. 486.

³ I refer to the presentation of the *Cocalus* and the *Aeolosicon*; see Kent, as above (*Classical Review* 20. 154): 'These two plays ... did not appear before 375.'

⁴ Haigh, p. 22; cf. the inscription in *Urkunden Dramatischer Aufführungen in Athen*, ed. by Adolf Wilhelm, pp. 27-9.

could be included among them. The last plays, the *Cocalus* and *Aeolosicon*, are regarded as distinct fore-runners of the New Comedy. Platonius recognizes the *Aeolosicon* as belonging to the type of the Middle Comedy;¹ but according to a Greek biographer,

'Aristophanes . . . was the first who exhibited the manner of the New Comedy, in the *Cocalus*; from which drama Menander and Philemon took their origin as playwrights. . . . He wrote the *Cocalus*, in which he introduced the seduction, and the recognition of identity, and all the other artifices that Menander emulated.'²

Had the two plays been preserved, we should doubtless see that, from first to last, Aristophanes ran the gamut of possibilities in Greek comedy.

We must now observe that the terms 'old' (παλαιά) and 'new' (νέα), familiar to us in the writings of later critics, are not applied to comedy in the *Poetics*; though a distinction between 'old' or 'ancient' (παλαιῶν) and 'recent' (καινῶν) comedies is made in *Nicomachean Ethics* 4.9 (= 14);³ while the stages or varieties of Old, New, and Middle Comedy (παλαιά, νέα, μέση) are recognized by the epitomator in the *Tractatus Coislinianus*.⁴ In the *Poetics*, 'old' (παλαιοί, 14.1453^b27) and 'new' (νέοι, 6.1450^a25) — not 'recent' (καινοί) — are loosely used to differentiate an earlier class of tragic poets, including Aeschylus and Sophocles, from a later, beginning with Euripides; and there is a similar distinction (6.1450^b7–8) between οἱ ἀρχαῖοι, including Sophocles, and οἱ νῦν, including Euripides and his followers or imitators.⁵ Now the lives of the three

¹ In Kaibel, p. 4.

² *Vita Aristophanis*, in *Prolegomena*, No. 11, Dübner; cf. Rogers, *Plutus*, pp. xxiii–xxiv.

³ See below, p. 120.

⁴ See below, p. 226.

⁵ Cf. Bywater, p. 167.

tragic poets overlapped (Aeschylus, *circa* B. C. 525–456; Sophocles B. C. 497 or 495–405; Euripides, B. C. 480–406). And the change in type of the comedies of Aristophanes shows itself as early as B. C. 393, when the *Ecclesiazusae* was exhibited. The death of Euripides, then, antedates the composition of the *Poetics* by perhaps seventy years, while the *Ecclesiazusae* antedates it by perhaps fifty-five; that is, if we agree with Croiset that most of the extant works of Aristotle probably belong to the period B. C. 335–323,¹ assuming, too, that the *Poetics* was among the earliest of them. If it was one of the later or latest, the intervals between it and the dates of Euripides and Aristophanes are longer. If Sophocles was one of the ‘old’ tragic poets, and Euripides one of the ‘new,’ though their activities coincided over a period of fifty years, and if Aristophanes was exhibiting comedies during the last twenty years of that period, and continued to be productive for twenty years more, why should not Aristotle find the turning-point between the earlier (not the archaic) and the later comedy where it is even now most apparent, in the time, and even in the works, of Aristophanes himself?

We see, in the main from Aristophanes, that the transition from the earlier type of Attic comedy went hand in hand with the circumstances of the Peloponnesian war. The *Ecclesiazusae* and the *Plutus*, as is noted by Rogers, ‘are the only extant comedies which were produced after the downfall of the Athenian empire.’² From these the development went on, in the *Aeolosicon* and the *Cocalus*, in the direction of Philemon and Menander; then followed the bulk of what we now

¹ Croiset 4. 693.

² Rogers, *Plutus*, p. xiii.

call the Middle Comedy, which Aristotle doubtless would include with the later plays of Aristophanes as 'new'; then came the New Comedy proper, as we term it, the high tide of which Aristotle did not live to see. Yet apart from the fact that he could study both an earlier and a later type in Aristophanes, his situation is analogous to that of a critic born in the Jacobean period of English comedy, and hence familiar with the Elizabethan type, who lived on to the time of the Restoration and its drama. There is a difference, in that the drama paused with the closing of the English theatres, whereas Greek comedy went on without cessation. But we have a political break in England, with the troublous times of the Commonwealth to match the fall of Athens; and the interval between the Elizabethan drama and the drama of the Restoration just about matches the interval between the death of Euripides, or the midway point in the career of Aristophanes, and the age of the *Poetics*.

There may be yet another parallel. The distinction which Aristotle draws in the *Ethics*¹ between the 'old' and the 'recent' comedies is possibly much the same as the difference between the broad humor of the Elizabethans and the innuendo of a Congreve. The innuendo of the Restoration is more like the language a gentleman would permit himself to use in private than are the obscenity and personal abuse of a Falstaff. But we need not on that account imagine that a good Greek critic, surveying both periods, would on every ground prefer Congreve, let alone Wycherley, to Shakespeare. The late Middle Comedy of Greece had its Wycherleys, too. And the Middle Comedy did *not*

¹ See above, p. 19; below, p. 120.

renounce the satire of well-known individuals. Legrand remarks upon the number of comedies of the Middle period having as title 'the name of a politician, of a man-about-town, or of a courtesan.'¹ One fragment of Epicrates is a long and dull attack, meant to be funny, on Plato and his school for their investigations into botany and zoology.² To Aristotle the mention of Plato, and of Speusippus, whose library he purchased after its owner's death, might not be gratifying, in view of his relations to them and of his own scientific interests. We should not jump to the conclusion that he would find nothing in the comedy of his own age that did not meet his approval. We should not run to any extreme in our speculations regarding his likes and dislikes. He mentions a verse in Anaxandrides as an 'iambic' line³; but it is probable that he liked it. His own jokes (if we accept a passage in Demetrius⁴) resembled banter, did not always differ from gibes, and sometimes ran close to buffoonery. He relished the tragic address of Gorgias to the swallow, 'when she dropped her leavings on him as she flew over': "'For shame, Philomela!'" 'In a bird, you know,' says the Stagirite, 'it would not be disgraceful, but in a maiden it would.'⁵

Indeed, we should expect from him a theory elastic enough to embrace the excellences of each type of comedy, both 'the old' and 'the recent' (? our 'Middle'). With his affection for the intermediate between two extremes, he might be conceived as inventing the terms 'Old,' 'New,' and 'Middle'; and we

¹ Legrand, p. 299.

² Athenaeus 2. 59c; cf. Kock 2. 287-8. Compare also Usener, *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, 1907, p. 83.

³ See below, pp. 159-60

⁴ See below, pp. 102-3

⁵ *Rhetoric* 3. 3.

might fancy that these obtained their present application from critics after the time of Menander. There is a haze surrounding the terms; we can but speculate concerning their origin.¹ In discussing tragedy, while Aristotle manifestly thinks of Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* as a close approximation to the ideal, it is clear that he has a high regard for Euripides' *Iphigenia among the Taurians*. Certainly there is one characteristic he would approve if he found it in the poets of his own generation; a later authority says:

'The poets of the Middle Comedy did not aim at poetic diction, but, following the custom of ordinary speech, they have the virtue of good sense, so that the poetic quality is rare with them. *They all pay attention to plot.*'²

If we had Aristotle's estimate of several 'recent' comedies, we should know more than we do of that Middle Greek Comedy which for us is intermediate as well in type as in point of time. Perhaps his ideal in comedy would be a compromise between the best of the earlier and the best of the later plays. If Aristophanes is both 'old' and 'new,' the *Birds* might be thought to combine the largest number of his excellences on either side — as Sophocles is a kind of golden mean betwixt the older Aeschylus and the more modern Euripides, or as *The Tempest* is the golden mean in Shakespearean comedy.

Little as we know of Aristotle's preferences in comedy, it is not idle to speculate about them from such data as we possess. Bywater, we recall,³ conjectures that the Aristotelian theory would have been more

¹ See below, p. 285. Plautus comes nearer than Terence to the Middle Comedy.

² *Anonymous* in Kaibel, pp. 8-9.

³ See above, p. 10

applicable to the New Comedy; this conjecture is in line with the notion of Bywater that in the extant *Poetics* Aristotle writes with an eye to the practice of the tragic authors of his own day — that he writes to be useful. Doubtless he did write with a practical as well as a theoretical aim, and accommodated his theory to current usage. Nevertheless the main principles of the work are derived, for tragedy and epic poetry, from Homer and Sophocles. There is no question that Aristotle deemed these two authors pre-eminent in their respective fields. Like all other great critics, he is conservative in his attitude to the past, while tolerant of the new when it is good, and benevolent toward the future. His first and only reference to Aristophanes in the *Poetics*, linking this poet with Homer and Sophocles, shows Aristotle to be conservative in his estimate of the comedy preceding his own time.

Important or unimportant, his references to comic poets, so far as we can identify them, if they indicate anything, show that he paid more attention to the authors of what we call the Old Comedy than to those of the next succeeding stage. The colorless citations in the remnants we have of the *Didascaliae*, and in fragments therewith associated, yield the names of Aristophanes (*Clouds*, both first and second version, *Peace*, two versions, *Frogs*, *Storks*, and apparently *Daedalus*), Eupolis (*Maricas* and *Flatterer*), Ameipsias (*Connus*), Cratinus (*Flagon*), Leucon (*Clansmen*), Archippus (*Ass's Shadow*), and Strattis.¹ In the *Poetics* there is mention of Aristophanes, Crates, Chionides, Epicharmus, Hegemon, Magnes, and Phormis. The

¹ For all references in Aristotle to comic poets, see below, pp. 140-161.

comic poet Plato (unless the reference be to the philosopher) is cited in the *Rhetoric*, and Strattis is quoted with approval in *De Sensu et Sensibili*. The sole early writer of comedy whom Aristotle names in a fashion that may imply disapproval is Ecphantides, mentioned in *Politics* 8.6, in a discussion of the flute; yet the objection to the music of the flute is on the score of its undesirability in the education of children and youths, and does not touch its recognized use in the realm of poetry. Crates evidently stands high in the opinion of Aristotle, since Crates attended to the construction of comic plots;¹ and Epicharmus seems to be a favorite with Aristotle as with Plato.² But for the significant reference to Aristophanes in the *Poetics*, we might take Epicharmus to be Aristotle's prime favorite among comic authors, for there are, all told, perhaps thirteen references to Epicharmus or lines of his throughout Aristotle's works. The remaining allusions to Aristophanes by name are two: examples of comic diminutives from the *Babylonians* are given in the *Rhetoric*; and the imaginary discourse attributed to the poet by Plato in the *Symposium* is noted, without bias, in the *Politics*. Further, the illustration of paromoiosis in *Rhetoric* 3.9.1410^a 28-9 seems to come from an unidentified play of Aristophanes. I lay no stress on the possibility that the Anti-Atticist's excerpt from the *Poetics*, τὸ δὲ πάντων κυντότατον, may be an Aristophanic formation.³

When Aristophanes has so notable a place near the beginning of the *Poetics*, why are the references to him elsewhere in Aristotle so few? One answer is that

¹ See below, pp. 177-8.

² See below, pp. 111-2.

³ See above, p. 5, below, pp. 150, 233; cf. Starkie, *Acharnians*, p. liii, No. 4.

chance often governs in such matters. The name of Virgil, a favorite author with Wordsworth, appears but once in the poetry of Wordsworth, and then only in the adjective 'Virgilian.' In like manner, though Aristotle esteems Sophocles, and doubtless esteems Aeschylus, too, above Euripides, yet throughout his works he cites Euripides something like twice as often as Sophocles, and more than four times as often as Aeschylus. In the *Politics* he refers to Sophocles once, to Aristophanes once, and to the quotable Euripides six times. No inference to the disadvantage of Aristophanes should be drawn from the paucity of allusion to him outside of the *Didascalíac*. If the valuable categories in the *Tractatus Coislinianus* come from Aristotle, he could have deduced and illustrated them all from Aristophanes, as the work of Rutherford and Starkie abundantly shows.

We turn to the next generation of comic poets, and first of all to the citations from Anaxandrides. He is cited once in the *Ethics*, and thrice certainly, and a fourth time possibly, in the *Rhetoric*; at best, five times in all (as compared, for example, with thirteen allusions to Epicharmus). From this ('*ex frequenti Anaxandridis commemoratione*'!) Meineke¹ concluded that Aristotle thought highly of the poet, and a belief to this effect has since prevailed.² The one possible and three certain references to Anaxandrides in the *Rhetoric* are close together in the third book;³ all we can infer from them is that Aristotle (if the third book be his) found Anaxandrides quotable in illustrating

¹ Meineke i. 369.

² But the error can be traced back to the Renaissance.

³ Within three chapters, and within three pages in Bekker's numbering: *Rhetoric* 3. 11. 1412^b27 (the doubtful citation); 3. 10. 1411^a18; 3. 11. 1412^b16; 3. 12. 1413^b25.

a few closely related points in rhetorical theory; they tell us almost nothing of this poet in relation to Aristotle's theory of comedy. The doubtful quotation, indeed, — 'A worthy man should wed a worthy wife' — he condemns for its tameness; one of the others (3.10.1411^a18) he calls an 'iambic' line; and in *Nicomachean Ethics* 7.11 he describes the poet as 'scoffing' or 'jeering.' He does speak in *Rhetoric* 3.11 of the 'admired' line in Anaxandrides: 'Well is it to die ere one has done a thing worthy of death.' Let us grant that he joined in admiring it. Yet were we to follow Butcher and others in attributing to Aristotle a dislike of Aristophanes for jeering and scoffing, for 'iambizing,' the balance of the references to Anaxandrides should tell against the latter also. If at most we believed that Aristotle found Anaxandrides generally quotable, yet he found Euripides more so, citing him six times in the *Rhetoric*, and many times elsewhere — for example, seven times in the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

Of the other poets belonging to what we term the 'Middle' Comedy, he distinctly mentions none save Philippus; the sole reference, in *De Anima*, may point to a confusion with Eubulus. The absence of indubitable allusion to Antiphanes,¹ the most fertile writer of this class, is at least worth noting. From the group of poets of the Middle Comedy, Croiset² singles out for brief treatment Antiphanes, Anaxandrides, Eubulus, and Alexis, and in that order. It has quite gratuitously been supposed by Meineke³ that a comedy alluded to in *Poetics* 13.1453^a37⁴ was the *Orestes* of Alexis;

¹ See below, pp. 34, 149.

² Croiset 3. 603-9.

³ See Kock 2. 358.

⁴ See below, p. 201.

if only one play is meant, we can not be sure that the comedy belonged to the age of Aristotle, though this seems likely, and much less can we determine its authorship. As for Eubulus and the reference in *De Anima* to a comedy on the tale of Daedalus, by 'Philippus' (the son of Aristophanes), the attribution is at best obscure;¹ the *Daedalus* of Aristophanes himself may in some way be involved. The reference to Xenarchus in the *Poetics*² is to the author of mimes, who must not be confused with the comic poet of the same name.

These meagre and partly doubtful references to Middle Comedy do not argue any great concern with it on the part of Aristotle. However, I desire not so much to belittle his concern with it as to stress his probably greater interest in Aristophanes; and will even bring forward a neglected piece of evidence that he may have had Antiphanes in mind at one point in the *Poetics*. In chapter 9,³ where he speaks of history as characterized by particular statements, and poetry by universal statements, he continues: 'In comedy this has already become clear; for the comic poets first combine plots out of probable incidents, and then supply such names as chance to fit the types — in contrast with the old iambic poets, who, in composing, began with the particular individual.' The illustration does not necessarily point to his immediate contemporaries, but, if it includes them, there is an interesting parallel in a fragment of Antiphanes' *Poiesis*. The parallel might be striking enough from the title of the comedy but for the frequency of such titles; Kock lists, in addition, a *Poiesis* by Aristophanes, a *Poietai* and a *Poietria* by

¹ Meineke 1. 340-3; Kock 2. 172-3.

² See below, p. 168.

³ See below, p. 192.

Alexis, a *Poietai* and a *Poietes* by Plato, another *Poietes* by Biottus, another by Nicochares, and yet another by Phoenicides.¹ It is more striking from what Aristotle says in the same chapter 9, and in chapter 13, about the familiar stories to which the practice of the tragic writers in his time had narrowed down. The thought of Antiphanes is sufficiently trite:

‘Tragedy is in every respect a fortunate type of poetry. First of all, the stories are familiar to the spectators before any of the characters begins to speak. The poet has only to revive a memory. If I merely name Oedipus, the spectators know the rest: his father Laius, his mother Iocasta, his daughters, his sons, his sufferings and all he did. Simply mention Alcmaeon, and the very children will promptly tell you the whole story — how in a fit of madness he slew his mother, and straightway, having done the deed,² he came and went, back and forth. Again, when they [the tragic poets] have nothing more to say, and have exhausted their dramatic invention, as easily as lifting a finger they raise the machine, and the spectators are content with the solution.

‘We [comic poets] lack these resources. We have to imagine everything — new names, what went before, what happens now, the change of fortune, and the opening of the play. If a Chremes or a Phido makes a slip in one of these points, he is hissed. A Peleus or a Teucer may safely make one.’³

If there is a debt on either side, the dates would favor a borrowing from Antiphanes (*circa* B. C. 404–330) by Aristotle, whose *Poetics* may have been composed near the latter date; though the reverse borrowing is possible.

¹ Kock 3. 704.

² Accepting Kock's conjecture of *δι δράσας* for *δ' ἄδραστος*.

³ Antiphanes, frg. 191, Kock 2. 90-1; compare Aristophanes, frg. 528, Kock 1. 526.

Kock takes the *Peparethia* mentioned in *Rhetoric* 2.23 to be the title of a comedy, and guesses at Antiphanes as the author.¹

Besides the maxim ('A worthy man,' etc.) doubtfully assigned to Anaxandrides, Kock lists some fifteen passages of unknown authorship which he treats as quotations or reminiscences from the comic poets in Aristotle. None of the sixteen² does he ascribe without question to the Old Comedy; six he places among fragments from the 'New' (which with him includes the 'Middle'); six are among the fragments concerning which he is doubtful whether they come from the New ('Middle') or the Old; one³ in his opinion may or may not have its source in a comic poet; and the remaining three⁴ contain mere chance-associations with the language of Cratinus, Aristophanes, and Strattis respectively.

What principle governs this distribution when there is no evidence? Apparently no true principle, but the presupposition that Aristotle necessarily leaned away from the Old Comedy of Aristophanes, and leaned toward the New. How far this belief has carried scholars may be seen in the following two cases. First, in *Politics* 1.7.1255^b29—30 Aristotle quotes as a familiar proverb the saying, 'Slave before slave, master before master.' And what Aristotle calls 'the proverb' (τὴν παροιμίαν) Bonitz (*Index Aristotelicus*, s. v. Φιλήμων) regards as a quotation from the *Pancratiastes* of

¹ Kock 3. 463, frg. 302.

² Kock 2. 164, Anaxandrides, frg. 79; (the following all of unknown authorship) 3. 448, frg. 207, 208, 209, 210; 3. 463, frg. 302; 3. 493, frg. 446, 447, 448, 449; 3. 524, frg. 650a; 3. 545, frg. 779. See also 3. 612, frg. 1229; 3. 712, frg. 243; 3. 724, frg. 684; 3. 730, frg. 38.

³ Kock 3. 612, frg. 1229.

⁴ Kock 3. 712, frg. 243, 3. 724, frg. 684; 3. 730, frg. 38.

Philemon, where the proverb certainly was used. Secondly, in *De Sophisticis Elenchis* 4.7.166a36-7 appears the line, ἐγώ σ' ἔθηξα δοῦλον ὄντ' ἐλευθέρων, from an original that later was probably known to Terence (cf. *Andria* 1. 1. 10); the substance of the *Andria* being drawn from Menander, Bonitz (*Index*, p. 454, s. v. Menandri) represents Aristotle as quoting from him. How likely is it that our author quoted from either Philemon or Menander? Aristotle taught at Athens from B. C. 335 to 323; he left Athens in 323, and died in 322. Philemon began to present comedies at Athens about B. C. 330; he died, B. C. 262, at the age of ninety-nine years; in that interval he is said to have produced either ninety or ninety-seven plays, sixty of which are known to us by title or by fragments. To suppose that Aristotle quoted from him is to suppose that *De Sophisticis Elenchis* was written within the last five years of Aristotle's activity — but we know virtually nothing about the sequence of his numerous writings; that the *Pancratiastes* was one of the first five or six comedies of Philemon; and that the proverb about slaves and masters was not a popular saw, and was not common property. As for Menander (? born B. C. 342), his first play was given in B. C. 322/1,¹ the year after Aristotle left Athens — the year of or after his death. Aristotle could not well have known any play by Menander; rather, he knew the sources and models, including plays of Aristophanes, which Menander followed. Yet Egger, sharing the prejudice of Bonitz and the rest, adduces the Plutarchian *Comparison of Aristophanes and Menander* as evidence of an Aristotelian tradition in Plutarch, antagonistic to the Old Comedy!² If we make

¹ Clark, *Classical Philology* 1 (1906). 313-28, argues for B. C. 324; this date would not spoil my case.

² Egger, p. 411.

the triple distinction between Old, Middle, and New Comedy, the generation of Menander, chief representative of the New in our sense, could have had no influence upon Aristotle's theory of poetry.¹

Doubtless the extant works of Aristotle contain still other, as yet unidentified, allusions to the comic poets;² and doubtless the lost works contained other allusions. His industry and flexibility as a student and writer were such that, when he devoted himself to a special investigation of comedy, he might frequently illustrate from an author, or from groups of authors, seldom alluded to in his other works. I have intimated that, if the *Tractatus Coislinianus* contains Aristotelian matter, we may suppose that various generalizations in it were originally provided with examples from Aristophanes, to judge, not merely from the chance illustrations preserved by Tzetzes,³ but from the wealth of the examples adduced by Rutherford and Starkie, and from evidence on the relation between 'opinion' and 'proof,' on the one hand, in the Tractate and the *Rhetoric*, and the corresponding devices, on the other, in Aristophanes.⁴ Or again, take the statement of the Tractate on the language of comedy: 'Comic diction is customary and popular.' The description would fit the poet of whom Maurice Croiset says: 'The diction of Aristophanes represents for us the very perfection of the Attic dialect in its familiar cast.'⁵ Quintilian speaks of the poet in similar fashion.⁶ As to character

¹ The propriety of the distinction has been discussed by Legrand, pp. 4-12.

² See my article, *A Pun in the Rhetoric of Aristotle*, in *The American Journal of Philology* 41. 48-56.

³ See below, pp. 288-9.

⁴ See below, pp. 265-80.

⁵ Croiset 3. 580.

⁶ *Institutio Oratoria* 10. 1. 65-6; see below, p. 92.

and plot, the following opinions recorded by Platonius and Tzetzes may embody something of the original Aristotelian theory :

‘In the delineation of human character Aristophanes preserved the mean ; for he is neither excessively bitter like Cratinus, nor over-kindly like Eupolis ; but he has the vigor of Cratinus toward the erring, and the tolerant kindness of Eupolis.’¹

‘And the Old Comedy itself is not uniform ; for they who in Attica first took up the production of comedy (namely Susarion and his fellows) brought in their personages in no definite order, and all they aimed at was to raise a laugh. But when Cratinus came, he first appointed that there should be as many as three personages in comedy, putting an end to the lack of arrangement ; and to the pleasure of comedy he added profit, attacking evil-doers, and chastising them with comedy as with a public whip. Yet he, too, was allied to the older type, and to a slight extent shared in its want of arrangement. Aristophanes, however, using more art than his contemporaries, reduced comedy to order, and shone pre-eminent among all.’²

Thus far I have tried to show some particular grounds for believing that Aristotle would be interested in Aristophanes ; that he did not underestimate him in comparison with the so-called Middle Comedy, or with the New. We now come to the question of general probability, keeping in mind, however, the text which links this poet with Sophocles and Homer. Other things being equal, is it on the whole likely that Aristotle would fail to recognize the genius of Aristophanes ? Is it not more likely that, if he recognized it, but if no record of his opinion were preserved, some one would accuse him of wanting the necessary insight, and others would repeat the accusation ? A similar want of insight

¹ Platonius, in Kaibel, p. 6

² Tzetzes, *ibid.*, p. 18 ; see below, p. 288.

regarding Aristophanes has been ascribed to Plato ; it is common to patronize any great thinker or man of taste for some such alleged defect of judgment.

The relation of Plato to comedy is reserved for another section ;¹ but the reader will excuse a few anticipatory remarks on this head. The bias of the philosopher is supposed to be shown in the *Republic* and the *Apology*. In the *Republic* he makes Socrates include the comic poets in the Socratic attack upon imitative art ; and in the *Apology* he makes the same dramatic personage complain of ill usage at the hands of Aristophanes in the *Clouds*. But what Plato makes Socrates affirm in the Dialogues, and what Plato himself thought and did, are not identical. The attack upon imitative art would exclude the imitative dialogue containing it from the ideal State of Socrates. Not only that, but it would exclude virtually all the Platonic Dialogues ; and among them the *Symposium*, in which Plato gives us a fictitious Aristophanes, devising for him a highly Aristophanic speech that must have convulsed the hearers with laughter. In the *Republic*, the Guardians are not to laugh immoderately. Could anything more clearly reveal the inner sympathy of Plato with the great comic poet than the ludicrous yet imaginative myth in question ? However, we have the testimony of Olympiodorus that Plato ‘greatly delighted in the comedies of Aristophanes and the mimes of Sophron ; so much so that, when he died, these works, we are told, were discovered in his bed.’² He bears no malice for the good-natured mockery of the *Republic*, if such there be, in the *Ecclesiastusac*, and must have seen in the *Birds* a great comic Utopia not inferior in

¹ See below, pp. 98-132.

² Quoted from Rogers, *Clouds*, p. xxix.

its kind to his own ; tradition has it that he sent the *Clouds* to Dionysius, tyrant of Syracuse, as an indication of the spirit of Athens, and that he composed the epitaph (eleventh Platonic Epigram in the *Greek Anthology*) :

The Graces, desiring an imperishable shrine, chose the soul of Aristophanes.¹

Aristotle counts as an even more objective critic than his master. Arguing from general probability, we may say that, of all the literary critics the world has seen, he is the one most likely to have appraised the worth of Aristophanes correctly. His opinion of Homer and Sophocles has stood the test of time. His analysis of tragedy has been the foundation of all subsequent inquiries, and has not been superseded. He is the master of critical analysis. The chances are a thousand to one that his insight into Greek comedy was superior to that of modern scholars like Meineke and Butcher. Cicero and Quintilian, who owe much to him, and have the same standard of refinement, recognize the value of the Old Comedy and its leading poet ;² Sir Thomas Elyot, an Aristotelian in spirit and training, prefers Aristophanes to Lucian on moral grounds.³ Was Aristotle inferior as a critic to them ? Or was he less likely than St. John Chrysostom, or Bishop Christopher Wordsworth,⁴ or Jeremy Taylor, to make

¹ Cf. Croiset 3. 532.

² Cicero, *De Legibus* 2. (15),³⁷, *De Officiis* 1. (29) (see below, p. 91) ; Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 10. 1. 65-6 (see below, p. 92).

³ Elyot, *The Governour* 1. 10. In speaking of Elyot as an Aristotelian, I refer to his political theory.

⁴ See Rogers, *Acharnians*, pp. li-lvi. Rogers would like to believe the statement of Aldus Manutius, made, in the year 1498, 'as though it were a matter of common notoriety,' that 'Saint Chrysostom is recorded to have set such store by Aristophanes that twenty-eight of the poet's comedies were never out of his hands, and formed his pillow when he slept ; and that from this source

allowance for those elements, the origin of which he knew, the vestiges in Aristophanes of the traditional phallic procession whence the Old Comedy in part arose? In our time we have no great difficulty in allowing for them, or for the broad humor and worse in Shakespeare; are we more objective than Aristotle? He must also have perceived a great literary critic at work in the *Frogs*, and doubtless in the lost *Poiesis*.

He might, indeed, have found fault with various details in the comedy of Aristophanes, as he does with details of procedure in Sophocles, and even in Homer. He might, like Rogers, have regretted 'that the phallic element should be so conspicuous' in the *Lysistrata*, when, as Rogers adds, 'in other respects there are few dramas — ancient or modern — which contain more noble sentiments or more poetic beauty.'¹ He might well have offered discrepant views in accounting for various excellences of different comic poets or schools of comedy; as he does in making out a case for the tragic quality in *Oedipus the King*, and again, contradicting the former argument, for the handling of the tragic incident in *Iphigenia among the Taurians*.² But could the author of the *Rhetoric* and *Poetics* have failed to see the power of the literary critic at work in the *Frogs*? Could the zoologist Aristotle have overlooked the exact and far-reaching knowledge of ornithology displayed in the *Birds*? Would the economist Aristotle miss the keen understanding of wealth and poverty beneath the laughter of the *Plutus*? The architectonic power of

he was thought to have drawn his marvelous eloquence and austerity.' Manutius' authority for his statement is unknown. Compare Anton Naegele, *Johannes Chrysostomos und sein Verhältnis zum Hellenismus*, in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 13 (1904). 73-113.

¹ Rogers, *Lysistrata*, p. ix.

² See my 'Amplified Version,' pp. xxvi-xxviii.

Aristophanes would not have escaped Aristotle, nor the play of imagination and inventive genius working freely and surely within the rigorous traditional scheme of the Old Comedy;¹ the skilful adaptation of means to ends for the arousal of mirth and joy in the *Birds* would not have escaped him; or else the judgment of the ages on Aristotle's eminence as a literary critic, and the judgment of Cicero and Quintilian regarding his ability as a stylist, are sadly at fault. The guess of Butcher — 'it is doubtful whether Aristotle had any perception of the genius and imaginative power of Aristophanes' — is, to say the least, highly improbable. The probabilities are that, in his judgment of Aristophanes, Aristotle was the same penetrating and incisive critic as in his judgment of Sophocles and Homer.

VI

THE PRINCIPLES OF THE PRESENT RECONSTRUCTION

We may assume, then, that Aristotle would not neglect Aristophanes and the contemporaries of that author; and we may assume that he would not neglect the poets (little as we know concerning them) of the 'Middle' Comedy — the direct forerunners of Philemon and Menander. To adapt what Bywater says of the *Poetics* and tragedy:² His ideal comedy would probably be a compromise between the comedy of the great era and that of his own day.

¹ See below, pp. 56-9.

² Bywater, p. viii.

Partly to recapitulate, but also advancing, let me state my main assumptions as follows.

(1) Bernays makes the *Tractatus Coislinianus* central. I make the *Poetics* as it stands central, and the schematic Tractate subsidiary.

(2) The scientific method employed by Aristotle in his investigation of tragedy remains the same in his examination of epic poetry, and would not be greatly modified in its application to comedy. So far as we now can discover, his fashion of investigating tragedy must have been somewhat as follows.¹

Starting with the Platonic-Socratic contention² that a literary form — an oration, for example, or a tragedy — has the nature of a living organism, Aristotle advanced to the position that each distinct kind of art must have a definite and characteristic activity or function, and that this specific function or determinant principle is equivalent to the effect that the form produces on a competent observer; that is, form and function being as it were interchangeable terms, the organism is what it *does* to the person capable of judging what it does or should do. Then further, beginning again with the general literary estimates, in a measure naïve, but in a measure also technical,³ that had become more or less crystallized in the interval between the great age of the Attic drama and his own time, and that helped him to assign tentative values to one play and another, the master-critic found a way to select out of a large extant literature a small number of dramas that must

¹ The next paragraph is taken with some modification from my notice of Anna Robeson Burr, *The Autobiography*, in the *Philosophical Review* 19 (1910). 344-8, esp. p. 345.

² See *Phaedrus* 264c.

³ See *Poetics* 15 (end), 17 (reference to Polyidus) — in my 'Amplified Version,' pp. 53, 59; see also above, pp. 32-3, below, pp. 126-7.

necessarily conform more nearly than the rest to the ideal type. As in the *Politics*, which is based upon researches into a large number of constitutions and municipalities, yet with emphasis upon a few, so in the *Poetics* his inductions for the drama must repose upon a collection of instances as complete as he knew how to make it without injury to his perspective; that is, his observation was inclusive so that he might not overlook what Bacon termed 'crucial instances.' Through a scrutiny of these crucial instances in tragedy, and doubtless through a study of the actual emotions in audiences at the theatre, he still more narrowly defined what ought to be the effect of this kind of art upon the ideal spectator, namely, the catharsis of pity and fear — the relief of disturbing emotions, and the pleasure attendant upon that relief. Then, reasoning from function back to form, and from form again to function, he would test each select drama, and every part of it, by the way in which the part and the whole conduced to this emotional relief. In this manner he arrived at the conception of an ideal structure for tragedy, a pattern which, though never fully realized in any actual play, must yet be the standard for all of its kind. He proceeded, if we have given the steps correctly, as does the sculptor, who after long observation, comparison, and elimination, by an imaginative synthesis combines the elements he has seen in the finest specimens of humanity into a form more perfect than nature ever succeeds in producing; or as does the anatomist, whose representation of the normal bones and muscles is likewise an act of imagination, ascending from the actual to an ideal truth, and is never quite realized in any one individual, though partially realized in what we should call a 'normal' man.

(3) Much of the *Poetics* as it stands is implicitly applicable to comedy; with a little manipulation it becomes directly applicable, and not merely to Aristophanes, but, such is its universality, to the fragments of Menander, and to Plautus and Terence, who restore to us some part of the lost Greek comedies intervening, and also to the modern comic poets.

The essence of my procedure, accordingly, is to make the necessary shift in the *Poetics*; to work back and forth from principles in that work to examples in comedy; and to use the Tractate as important but subsidiary, adding examples to illustrate it, after the fashion of Starkie, from Aristophanes, Shakespeare, Molière, and other sources.

Since the foundations of modern science and scholarship were laid down by Aristotle, this procedure will, as I trust, tend to produce a more illuminating theory of comedy than any hitherto put forward. If my own effort should strike the reader as but partly successful, then I hope that effort will stimulate some expert classical scholar to apply more happily what seems to be a correct method. Rightly utilized, the method should lead to a more helpful theory than, for example, that of Cornford in *The Origin of Attic Comedy*, or that of Zielinski in *Die Gliederung der Altattischen Komoedie*. Cornford is ingenious and suggestive, Zielinski both brilliant and solid; but the aim of each is different from that of Aristotle. Cornford lays all the emphasis upon the ritual origins of the type; as his title indicates, he is an evolutionist; and he is well aware that 'in the *Poetics* [Aristotle] was not concerned with ritual origins. . . . How much more he knew or might have inferred

about the earliest stages of comedy we can not tell.¹ Zielinski is occupied with his well-known theory of the agon, or contention, as the basic element of comedy, and with questions of mechanical structure — with external form rather than essential function; that is, with what Aristotle would call the quantitative,² rather than the qualitative, parts of comedy, and not with the psychological effect of the whole. Every student of comedy is much indebted to the Russian scholar. But, as we may learn from Aristotle,³ in art, just as in life, the end or aim — the function — is all-important. Aristotle does not altogether forget the evolutionary process by which Greek comedy came into existence; still, his historical sketch is subordinate to the question of the effect produced by the best comedy. Nor does he overlook the quantitative parts of tragedy, though they are for him a minor consideration.

VII

FUNDAMENTAL DEMANDS OF ARISTOTLE

To judge from the *Poetics*, what would Aristotle demand of a comedy as conducing to the function of a perfect work of art in this kind?

(1) First of all, organic unity. To him, a work of art is like a living animal in that it is a unified organism. Even though the scheme of the whole were distorted for comic purposes, still it would be complete and unified; we might compare it to the outline of a ludicrous animal, which does not lack a sort of comic perfection.

¹ Cornford, p. 219; compare Egger, p. 250.

² See below, p. 198.

³ *Poetics* 6.

Or we might compare it to a comic mask, which, though distorted, is not disorganized, but is complete and a whole.

(2) Again, if a given drama is to be classed as a comedy, Aristotle would demand that it produce the proper effect of comedy — not any chance effect, but a calculated one, and the right one. And the end or aim will determine the means.

(3) The correct means may be various, chiefly consisting in what is said and done in the play, and secondarily in the employment of music and spectacle. But underneath all lies the proper use of the law of proportion, and the law of probability or necessity in the sequence or order of details. That is, whether he keeps things in proportion, or throws them out of proportion, the writer of comedy must understand true perspective. He must understand the law of proportion as surely as any other artist, as the tragic poet, in order to deviate from it in the right way, at the right time, and to the right extent.

(4) Similarly with the law of probable or necessary sequence, to which Aristotle attaches so much weight in considering tragedy and epic poetry. The comic poet must work with this law clearly in mind, in order to deviate from it, when deviate he may or must, in the right way, and not in some inartistic fashion.

(5) According to Aristotle, in every drama there are six constitutive elements, to each of which the poet must give due attention. These are . (a) plot ; (b) *ethos* or moral bent (shown in the kind of choices made by the personages of the drama) ; (c) *dianoia* or 'intellect' (the way in which the personages think and reason, their generalizations and maxims, their processes in

going from the particular to the general or from the general to the particular, and their efforts to magnify or to belittle the importance of things); (d) the diction, the medium in which the entire story is worked out by the poet through the utterance of the personages; (e) melody or the musical element in the drama (including the chants of the chorus, individual songs, and the instrumental accompaniment); (f) 'spectacle' (all that appertains to costume, stage-setting, scenery, and the like). The composing dramatist obviously does have to attend to these six elements, and the list, as Aristotle correctly observes, is exhaustive. It would be the same for a comic as for a tragic poet.

(6) As in tragic and epic poetry, so in comedy Aristotle would regard the plot, or general structure of the whole, as the chief of the qualitative or constituent parts of the play, since everything else depends on that. He would deem the plot, or plan, or outline of the *Frogs*, let us say, to be fundamental, and might add that a poet should make a generalized sketch of his comedy before working out the details; for example, thus:

The god who presides over the musical and dramatic contests in a certain city, finding that all the good tragic poets are dead, goes to another world to bring back one poet — and brings back another. There is a comic reversal of fortune. All the other incidents depend upon this main story.

And similarly he might sketch a somewhat different type of comedy, like the *Plutus*, which we have, or the *Cocalus*, which is lost.

Under this head some explanation is called for. As opposed to the episodic structure in many plays of the Old Comedy, the development of a more closely-knit

comic entanglement and unraveling, on the order of the involved action in tragedy, began early, and seems to have led from Sicily and Epicharmus through Crates, through the later plays of Aristophanes, and through some, but not all, of the plays of the Middle Comedy, to Philemon, Menander, and Diphilus.¹ In spite of what Cornford and others think, the intricate plot of Menander is not an inheritance from Euripides;² as Prescott rightly argues,³ the debt of Menander to Euripides has been overestimated. Menander is said to have learnt much from the practice of Aristophanes.⁴ He may owe more to the *Poetics* than to Euripides, since he was a pupil of Theophrastus, who studied under Aristotle and was his successor as head of the Peripatetic school. Further, in the growth of comedy the existence of an intermediate between it and tragedy — that is, the satyr-drama, — and the gradual approximation of all three from constant mutual influence, must not be left out of account. We observe, too, that Aristophanes was a careful student, and an excellent critic, not only of Euripides, but of Aeschylus and Sophocles as well; that he admired Sophocles above all is evident in the *Frogs*.⁵

Accordingly, the preference by Aristotle, in *Poetics* 10 and 13, of the 'involved' over the 'episodic' action in tragedy would, as some believe, make a similar preference not unnatural for him in comedy; yet it may be thought that at this point his treatment of

¹ See above, pp. 27, 29.

² Cornford, p. 198.

³ Henry W. Prescott, *The Interpretation of Roman Comedy*, in *Classical Philology* 11 (1916). 146.

⁴ See above, p. 23.

⁵ See my article, *Greek Culture*, in the *Encyclopædia Americana* (1919) 13. 384-7; and compare below, pp. 251, 255.

comedy might diverge from his treatment of tragedy, and the more so if he drew much of his theory from the plays of Aristophanes that are known to us. At the same time I must dissent from a common opinion,¹ and surely from exaggerated forms of it, as to the relative unimportance, as is alleged, of the main action in the works of Aristophanes taken generally. The fundamental thing in each of his plays as we know them is a great comic idea or substantial form which gives rise to all the details of each; it is, even more than the wealth of imagination with which he renders it incarnate, the primary mark of his genius.

This form may be called either a *λόγος* or a *μῦθος*, since Aristotle uses either word for the plot or fable of a drama, and since plot in its most general sense means to him the basic idea of a play. Cornford is mistaken when he asserts that 'the proper term for the comic plot is not *mythos*, but *logos*':² and Zielinski is correct in holding that the terms are interchangeable, but hardly so in thinking that, because Aristophanes repeatedly describes the content of his plays by *logos*, this word is therefore specially applicable to the argument in the Old Comedy.³ Aristotle speaks of the Sicilians Epicharmus and Phormis as composing plots (*μῦθους ποιῆσθαι*),⁴ and, in a passage to which we have referred,⁵ he mentions Crates as the first Athenian to drop the comedy of invective, and to frame stories of a general and non-personal sort, that is, to make *λόγους καὶ μῦθους*. And, again, in *Rhetoric* 3.14.

¹ Cf. Croiset 3. 513; Zielinski, pp. 30-2; Cornford, pp. 198-9; Shorey, in Warner's *Library of the World's Best Literature* (s. v. Aristophanes) 2. 760.

² Cornford, p. 109.

³ Zielinski, p. 32 and footnote.

⁴ See below, p. 177.

⁵ See above, p. 29, below, pp. 177-8.

1415^a12 (ἐν δὲ τοῖς λόγοις καὶ ἔπεισι δεῖγμα ἔστι τοῦ λόγου¹) *logos* stands for plot, tale, fable, argument, in a very elastic sense, certainly including heroic and mythical stories as handled by the poets. Further, if Aristophanes used *logos* for the content of a comedy, Antiphanes referred to the fables of tragedies as *logo*.² Popular usage could not have been very strict. 'It ought to be noticed, however,' says Rutherford, 'that scholiasts, like all the later Grecians, never speak of the plot of a comedy as μῦθος, but invariably call it ὑπόθεσις.'³ Perhaps in the time of Aristotle, 'fables' (μῦθοι) could be more suitably applied to legendary material adapted by the poet, and λόγοι to his own inventions, when there is a sharp distinction between two sorts of comic play. However, in Aristophanes and others, down to Plautus and Terence, we find traditional tales of gods and heroes, and the like, intermingled with the new devices of the author — as in the *Birds*, *Frogs*, and *Plutus*, and in the *Amphitryon*. In spite of Cornford, then, the fable of the *Plutus* might be indifferently termed a *logos* or a *mythos*. And, to repeat, this *mythos* or *logos* would for Aristotle be the very soul of the comedy. Further, the assumption would agree well enough with modern theories concerning the agon or 'debate' as the centre of the Aristophanic drama. Thus, according to Rogers, the debate between Just Reason and Unjust Reason in the *Clouds* 'is the very core of the play. Every preceding scene leads up to it; every subsequent scene looks back to it.'⁴

In referring to plot, the epitomator in the Tractate boldly offers the expression 'comic myth' (μῦθος

¹ See below, p. 140.

² See above, p. 33.

³ Rutherford, p. 454.

⁴ Rogers, *Clouds*, p. xvi.

κωμικός).¹ In the scholia on Dionysius Thrax, and again in Tzetzes, the word *πλάσμα* is found as a technical term for the substructure of comedy, in contrast with the 'story' (*ἱστορία*) of tragedy; the term no doubt is derived from some early, perhaps very early, 'source' in literary criticism; if not Alexandrian, it may be Attic. The scholiast says: 'Tragedy differs from comedy in that tragedy has a story (*ἱστορίαν*) and a report (*ἀπαγγελίαν*) of deeds that are past, but comedy embraces fictions (*πλάσματα*) of the affairs of everyday life.'² Tzetzes echoes the same source, adding a slight qualification in regard to tragedy, but with no variation in regard to comedy.³ Aristotle does not use the word *πλάσμα* in his critical writings; we meet it once in his *Physica Auscultatio* 8.252a5, and twice in *De Caelo* 2.289a6, 289b25, in the depreciatory sense of 'fiction.'

(7) If the constituents of comedy are plot, character, intellect, diction, music, and spectacle, and if plot were not the most important of these six, then one of the other five would have to be more important. It would not be fair to argue that any two, or three, or four, or all five, of the others were more important; for Aristotle does not think of balancing one against two or more of the elements which severally require poetic art.

It might seem at first glance that 'intellect' (*διανοία*), or the way in which the comic personages reason, would demand more skill than the general plan of the comedy. Yet on reflection it is clear that their comic inferences, maxims, exaggerations, and

¹ See below, p. 226.

² Kaibel, p. 11; cf. Tzetzes, *Γαμβοὶ τεχνικοὶ περὶ κωμῳδίας*, line 76. in Kaibel, p. 42, and the anonymous writer *Περὶ κωμῳδίας*, line 49 (§ 12), in Kaibel, p. 8.

³ Kaibel, p. 17; see also below, p. 86.

diminutions — their use of ‘opinion’ and ‘proof’ — might be slighted by the poet with less injury than would ensue from negligence with respect to *ethos*. It is the *ethos* or moral bent of the agents that in Aristotle’s view makes a characteristic difference between comedy and tragedy. And to him *ethos* would have the same relation to plot in comedy as in tragedy; it would be second in importance to plot.

Or again, it might seem that the musical element, or the spectacular, would have a greater relative value in comedy; one thinks of the contribution made to the general effect of the *Birds* or the *Frogs* by the music and the spectacle — now largely impossible to reconstruct even in imagination. But, after all, the play can and does exist without them, as it could not without the diction. The *Birds* could be read with enjoyment, and now must be read and enjoyed, when deprived of stage-setting (including costume) and music. Though in one sense it is direct presentation in a theatre, by actors, and with stage-accessories, that makes the comedy a play, and to the full extent a piece of ‘mimetic’ art; and though Aristotle for this reason includes ‘spectacle’ with music among the constituent parts; yet the play does not cease to give the effect of comedy when they are lost. Without diction it could not have been transmitted to us at all.

Even so, in the scale of values diction can not take precedence of ‘intellect’ (any more than ‘intellect’ can take precedence of *ethos*), however much the comic effect may depend upon word-play, comic metaphor, verbal diminutives and superlatives of a ludicrous sort, and the like.

In analyzing the constituents of the drama, Aristotle proceeds from what is more inward to what is more

superficial, from what comes first in the mind of the poet to what comes later, and from what directly concerns the poetic art to what incidentally concerns it, or partly requires the help of another art such as that of the costumer. It follows that in ranking the several elements in comedy he would give them the same relative positions as in tragedy: first, plot; second, *ethos*; third, *dianoia*; fourth, diction; fifth, the musical element; sixth, the spectacular.

(8) The synthesis of these six elements will produce the comedy, and the order of their importance is determined also by the contribution they severally make to the effect of the whole. The comedy is judged by its total effect. What, according to Aristotle, should the effect of the best comedy be? This difficult question, if soluble at all, requires extended treatment, which must be postponed to a later section.¹ Meanwhile let us take up the analysis of comedy from another side.

VIII

THE QUANTITATIVE PARTS OF COMEDY

Aristotle distinguishes between the qualitative elements, which jointly constitute the essence of a play, and the quantitative parts, which we should call the mechanical divisions of it. The six qualitative or constituent elements, which we have just examined, we may liken to the tissues of a living organism — bone, muscle, nerve, skin, for example; whereas the quantitative parts are like the head, trunk, and limbs, which, taken together, by another kind of synthesis, also form

¹ See below, pp. 60-98.

the whole. This dual distinction of parts, according to quality and extent, may be observed in anything that is one and entire, since an object may be regarded as a unit in that it has one special function which all its constituents subserve — as a horse is a unit in that all its tissues subserve the act of running;¹ or it may be regarded as a unit in that, being distinct from all other objects, it is a continuous whole, having a beginning, middle, and end.

In this sense, the beginning, middle, and end are the quantitative parts in any work of art. But in a more technical sense Aristotle gives as the quantitative parts of tragedy the recognized divisions into which a Greek tragedy falls: prologue, episode, exode, and choricon, the last-mentioned, the choral portion, being further divided by him into parode and stasimon. Even in the use of a term like 'prologue,' however, he is sometimes more, and sometimes less, exact. The word as it first occurs in the *Poetics*² may refer to a statement made before the opening of the drama proper; later in that work it is defined as 'all that precedes the parode of the chorus.'³ In the *Rhetoric*, again, it is used very loosely in the sense of beginning; if Aristotle had the same text as we of *Oedipus the King*, he could speak of a passage half-way along in the tragedy (lines 774 ff.), though still in the complication, as in the 'prologue.'⁴ In like manner he gives a technical definition of episode for tragedy, and also loosely employs 'episodes,' and a related verb, to describe the elaborations, or filling,

¹ *Horse* (= *courser*) is etymologically related to Latin *currere*. I here elucidate the familiar distinction of Aristotle in a way that has proved helpful to modern university students.

² *Poetics* 5. 1449^b4.

³ *Ibid.* 12. 1452^b16, 19-20.

⁴ See below, p. 141.

with which an outline sketch may be lengthened out into an epic poem.¹

In the *Tractatus Coislinianus* the epitomator gives us the same four quantitative parts for comedy that we have just noted as the Aristotelian divisions of tragedy, in this order: prologue, choricon, episode, and exode.² In the *Poetics* an 'episode' is defined as 'all that comes between two whole choral songs.'³ Now, the relation between the choral parts and the incidents being different in the Greek comedies we possess from what it is in the tragedies, suspicion has been cast on the term 'episode' in the Tractate, and hence on the whole scheme of parts given by the epitomator; it is argued that the scheme has been crudely transferred from the analysis of tragedy, in the *Poetics*, to that of comedy.⁴ But our ignorance of the body of plays which Aristotle and his followers had under observation should make us wary; his own varying use of terms we have noted. If he tried to generalize from the practice of authors all the way from Epicharmus to Anaxandrides, he might have called a portion of a comedy intervening between two portions more distinctly musical an episode.

Under the circumstances, it seems best to note, as we have done, the divisions given in the Tractate, and then to present a brief account of the quantitative parts of the Old Comedy as viewed by modern scholarship. In recent years much attention has been paid to this kind of analysis with regard to Aristophanes, under the impulse of Zielinski.⁵ Here fol-

¹ *Poetics* 17; see below, pp. 206-7.

² See below, p. 226.

³ See below, p. 198.

⁴ Zielinski, pp. 3-4.

⁵ See Bibliography, above, p. xxi.

lows, in substance, the adaptation of Zielinski by Mazon :¹

‘Some [of these terms] go back to antiquity, but in large part they are the invention . . . of Zielinski himself.

‘Comedy has some parts in common with tragedy : prologue, parade, exode.² . . .

‘The songs of the chorus (*chorica*) which in comedy correspond to the tragic *stasima* are varied in nature. They may consist of reflections by the chorus on the preceding action ; or they may be interludes pure and simple, and in that case they most often take the shape of short satirical songs. [Aristotle, however, objects to choral interludes in the drama, or to anything in a play that is not organically related to the idea of the whole, and is not in its right place ; see below, p. 209.] But the point to remember is that the term *choricon* should not be applied to all the songs of the chorus ; it appertains only to those that mark a pause in the action, or that form part of a series. The strophe which opens an *agon*, for example, can not be called a *choricon*.

‘Greek tragedy also admits parts sung by the actors, lyric monologues (*μνησθίζα*), and lyric dialogues (*χορμολ*)³ — whether between two actors or between an actor and the chorus. These devices were known to comedy also, where they were frequently employed. But, to tell the truth, when employed, they seem always to parody tragedy, or at least to imitate it very closely, and much more often than not some definite passage in a new tragedy. Accordingly, they are not the elements of tragedy which the comic drama essentially transformed and adapted to its own nature.

‘On the other hand, there are two parts of comedy that are peculiar to it alone, and these we must therefore subject to a precise analysis. They are the *parabasis* and the *agon*.

¹ See Bibliography, above, p. xviii.

² But see below, pp. 198-9.

³ ‘This is the term now generally adopted to designate all dialogue that is sung. Actually, the ancients restricted the term to duos composed as lamentations only.’ — Note by Mazon.

' The parabasis is ordinarily placed at the middle of the comedy. The actors go back again into the hut (σκηνή); the chorus take off their mantles, and turn toward the audience.

' The parabasis comprises six¹ parts.

' (1) The commation, a brief bit of transition generally containing an adieu to the actors, who retire from the stage, and an invitation, addressed to the audience, to hear the parabasis. The commation is most often a system of anapaestics; but it could be written in anapaestic tetrameters, sometimes even in glyconics.

' (2) The parabasis proper, almost always in anapaestic tetrameters — so often, in fact, that the ancients commonly referred to it as οἱ ἀνάπαιστοι. It is for us the most curious feature of the Old Comedy. The poet, through the mouth of the leader of the chorus, appealed directly to the public, made his complaints to it, set forth his claims, and, above all, sought to present himself as its most benevolent and enlightened counselor. The parabasis ends with the macron, an anapaestic system which the actor must recite without taking a second breath even if he should lose his wind — whence its other name, *pnigos*, i. e., "suffocation." It is a sort of brilliant finale, a "bit of bravura," which we meet again in the agon.

' (3) The ode could be written in the most diverse lyric metres. It is sometimes an invocation to the gods; often a satirical song, now frank and almost brutal, again disguised as an imitation of the tragic style.

' (4) The epirrhema, in trochaic tetrameters. The number of these tetrameters is always a multiple of four. It is probable that this law was imposed on the poets by the dance which accompanied the epirrhema, since the tetrameters are a dancing-measure, and no doubt some rhythmic order of dancers required this quadruple arrangement. Having danced out the ode, the chorus took to dancing while the leader gave the epirrhema in recitative. The subject of the epirrhema

¹ But see below, p. 190.

was most often a complaint of the poet ; but the tone is less personal than in the anapaests ; politics are more in evidence, and now the chorus speaks in its own character.

‘ (5) The antode.

‘ (6) The antepirrhema.

‘ The earliest comedies of Aristophanes are the only ones with complete parabases. In the *Peace*, epirrhema and antepirrhema are already missing ; in the *Frogs*, it is the anapaests that are lacking. Finally, the *Ecclesiazusae* and the *Plutus* contain no parabasis whatever.

‘ Besides the main parabasis, the earliest comedies of Aristophanes have a secondary parabasis, which most often is composed of an ode with antode, and an epirrhema with antepirrhema. In reality it is not a true parabasis, since it lacks the essential element of one, namely the anapaests ; a mere external similarity has given it the name. Yet it has this in common with the parabasis that the epirrhema often deals with the same topics as the epirrhema of the parabasis. But again, we must note that this epirrhema is not necessarily in trochaic tetrameters ; it is sometimes written in the rhythm of the paeon.

[The term *agon*, and the names given to its parts, were invented by Zielinski.]

‘ *Agon* is the name given to a combat in the form of a dialogue, between two personages each of whom supports a thesis opposed to that of the other. One thesis is often the case of the poet and the subject of the comedy itself ; and hence the importance of the *agon*, its place at the centre of the comedy, and its frequently long-drawn-out developments.

‘ The *agon* is generally composed as follows. It is double, each of the two interlocutors having to plead his cause in turn ; in which case it is commonly written in two different metres. . . .

‘ The *agon* begins with a song by the chorus. Then the leader of the chorus gives the note to the actors in two tetrameters, the rhythm of which the actors instantly adopt. As these tetrameters always begin

with the word ἀλλὰ — “ Now then ! ” — they have been called the cataceleusmos.

‘ The scene proper, the epirrhema, is composed with no little freedom ; but it nearly always begins with the words, καὶ μὴν — “ Well then ! ” — and ends in a pñigos. In general, when the agon is double, each of the epirrhemas belongs to one of the interlocutors, while the other indulges only in brief interruptions. A third personage plays the part of buffoon, and enlivens the somewhat rigorous scheme with casual jokes, commonly announced by expressions such as ἐλάττει γούν. or ἑσβύει γούν.

‘ Then there is an antode corresponding to the ode, an antepirrhema corresponding to the epirrhema, an antipñigos corresponding to the pñigos, and finally the leader of the chorus sometimes briefly formulates the conclusion of the dispute (sphragis).

‘ The agon is not always double. When it is single, and written in one metre throughout, the verse is generally anapaestic tetrameter.’¹

I give this analysis mainly in order to fill out the perspective of our subject. It is by no means certain that Aristotle would concern himself with all the details of the comic chorus. The *Poetics* casts a rapid glance at the tragic chorus, but, as a practical treatise for authors, does not delay over a function that in Aristotle’s time was falling, or had fallen, into disuse. In his time there may have been little need for a long treatment of the choral element in comedy. He stands midway between Aristophanes, with whom this element gradually diminishes, and Menander, in whose plays, according to Legrand, the performances of the chorus had nothing to do with the action, being ‘ interludes, in the strictest sense of the word.’² Besides, Aristotle is less interested in the quantitative than in

¹ Mazon, pp. 10-13.

² Legrand, pp. 336-8.

the qualitative aspects of poetry. For him, the effect is the paramount consideration.

IX

THE EFFECT OF COMEDY

What did Aristotle think was the function of comedy? The problem, as we have said,¹ is at best only partly soluble. Let us begin with what can be ascertained, before proceeding to what is more or less hypothetical.

(1) For Aristotle each kind of art has its own special quality, connected with its specific effect. The characteristic of tragedy is the arousal of pity and fear in such a way as to relieve the spectator of these emotions. The characteristic of comedy, then, is not the arousal and relief of pity and fear.

(2) (The specific effect of each kind of mimetic art is some kind of pleasure — the kind of pleasure appropriate to that art.) (The proper effect of comedy, then, is some form of pleasure; not necessarily some one single form — in Aristotle's view, for aught we know, it might be single, or it might be compounded of two or more forms.)

(3) Whether simple or compound, the effect of comedy for Aristotle would be the pleasure aroused by the right means in the right sort of spectator.) (His ideal spectator is the mature man of sound reason and correct sentiment; not necessarily an expert, but at all events a man of taste and culture.)

(4) (The spectator beholds in comedy an imitation of men in action. He perceives a resemblance between

¹ See above, p. 53.

the comedy and human life. He thinks to himself, 'This is like that.' His inference gives him pleasure; for all learning is pleasant, since it is a satisfaction of the universal desire of mankind to know.

(5) The pleasure of comedy is associated with the perception of a defect or ugliness that is neither painful nor injurious.¹ It is associated with our sense of disproportion.

(6) It is a pleasure similar to that produced in us by the *Odyssey*, save that the outcome of the *Odyssey*, while a happy one for Odysseus and his household, is disastrous to the wooers of Penelope. It is the pleasure aroused by the story of Orestes and Aegisthus when treated in such fashion that these heroes, legendary foes in the tragic poets, at the end of the comedy walk off the stage as friends, without any one slaying or being slain.

(7) The pleasure of comedy is the actual effect produced upon the audience. It is something capable of being observed in the theatre, or in the man who reads the comedy away from the theatre. This effect may be described as psycho-physiological. An outward aspect of it is laughter.)

(8) Among accessory means to the effect of comedy, the musical element is very helpful, as is also the spectacular, the latter, one may imagine, especially in comedies where the scene is laid in another world² — as in the *Birds* or the *Frogs*.

(9) There is a pleasure arising from the marvelous, and the marvelous is to some extent admissible in

¹ The word *φθαρτικόν* is often translated 'destructive,' the usual meaning in Aristotle (see Bonitz, s. v. *φθαρτικόν*); but here perhaps we should say 'corrupting.' See below, pp. 87-8, 176.

² Cf. *Poetics* 18; see below, p. 208

comedy. Wonder gives rise to learning, and learning is pleasant.

(10) Discoveries (recognitions, whether of persons or things, or of deeds, but especially of the identity of persons) afford pleasure in all stories, and hence in comedy; so also reversals of fortune. In the most amusing situations, discovery is attended by such reversal. In comedy the reversal will be from worse fortune to better; or, if from better to worse, at all events it will not be serious or painful.)

(11) As in tragedy there is a kind of incident having the technical name of *pathos* or 'suffering' (such as wounds, violent deaths, and the like), so in comedy there will be an incident or incidents of a ludicrous or especially hilarious or joyful sort.

(12) In *Rhetoric* 1.11 we meet several of the foregoing points, with additions. At the beginning of the chapter Aristotle defines pleasure as 'a certain motion of the soul, and a settling, sudden and perceptible, into one's normal and natural state.' Further on he says: 'Wonder and learning, too, are generally pleasant; wonder, because it involves the desire to learn, and hence the wonderful is an object of desire; and learning, because it involves a settling into one's natural state.' At the end of the chapter he alludes to the pleasure of the laughable: 'Since amusement and relaxation of every kind are among pleasant things, and laughter, too, it follows that the causes of laughter must be pleasant — namely, persons, utterances, and deeds.) But the forms of the ludicrous have had a separate treatment in the *Poetics*.'

¹ Ἀνθρώπων καὶ λόγους καὶ ἔργα. Jebb translates λόγους by 'words'; Welldon renders the phrase by 'whether a person or tale or circumstance.' In *Poetics* 20 we see that a λόγος may

More of this chapter, and other extracts from Aristotle on pleasure in general, will be found in a later section.¹

So much, I believe, may fairly be asserted or inferred regarding the effect of comedy in the light of the *Poetics*, with the help of one or two general notions familiar to every student of Aristotle.

When we approach the crucial question, however, we are on uncertain ground. What in an Aristotelian theory of comedy would correspond to the catharsis of pity and fear which is the proper effect of tragedy?

(1) Perhaps nothing definite; we may as well begin sceptically. Perhaps like Cicero, Aristotle approved laughter merely 'because it softens or unbends sorrow and severity.'² Possibly, as McMahon contends, 'the significance of the theory of catharsis was small in Aristotle's view',³ scholars may have too readily assumed the existence of a comprehensive and searching treatment of the subject, differentiated for tragedy and comedy. The *Politics* sends the reader to the *Poetics* for a fuller account of catharsis,⁴ but the reference may be an interpolation, casual and misleading. Or, accepting the authenticity of the reference, possibly we may argue thus: Aristotle noted the fact of the catharsis as something ultimate; in medicine one is less concerned with the process of purgation, so long as it duly occurs, than with the means of effecting it;

include anything from a single statement up to the entire Iliad. See my 'Amplified Version,' p. 69; and compare below, p. 211.

¹ See below, pp. 132-40.

² See below, p. 88.

³ McMahon, pp. 23-5.

⁴ See below, p. 130.

having noted it as a fact in tragedy, in the *Poetics* he elaborates upon the means by which it is to be produced, without hammering at a plain and accepted observation. In this way, much of the work may be said to deal with the tragic purgation, and, tragedy being for him the representative type of poetry in general, the reference from the *Politics* is justified as matters stand. When he dealt with comedy, he might, according to this view, have little to say about the fact of a comic catharsis, and yet dwell sufficiently upon the means by which laughter is properly aroused. As Bywater believes,¹ Aristotle, though a systematic philosopher, was not systematic, as a modern writer would be, in attempting to harmonize all his utterances on related topics as they were taken up in different connections, or even under different associations of thought in the same work.

If he actually defined comedy in terms of its effect, it is strange that no intelligible, clearly-marked vestige of his definition has come down to us. The definition in the Tractate² offers no safe foothold; it seems, though scholars are not unanimous in this opinion,³ to be imitated (not by Aristotle) from his definition of tragedy, at least so far as concerns the catharsis. The remarks of Cicero⁴ indicate that, conversant as he was with Peripatetic writings, he was unacquainted with any good scientific treatment of the ludicrous as a means of purgation. Nor does the evidence of Proclus Diadochus help us more.⁵ There is no aid from antiquity, early or late. It may be, then, that

¹ Bywater, pp. xiii-xvii.

² See below, p. 224.

³ Kayser, p. 31.

⁴ See below, pp. 87-9.

⁵ See below, p. 84.

Aristotle, like the modern psychologist,¹ was baffled, could not explain the nature of comedy by its effect upon the human organism (soul and body), and hence could give no definition of comedy parallel to his definition of tragedy.

Nevertheless, while realizing that we are treading uncertain ground, we may consider the problem from various sides.

(2) The function of tragedy is to arouse, and by arousing to relieve, two of the common disturbing emotions of daily life. Aristotle, it would seem, believed that men in general suffer from pity and fear, and other latent emotions, and may be relieved from the burden of pity and fear through witnessing the artistic representation of things piteous and fearful in tragedy. The cure is homeopathic. We may therefore examine the *Nicomachean Ethics*, where pity and fear are discussed at some length with other emotions, in order to see which of these latter conceivably might take the place of tragic pity and fear in a definition of comedy. In Book 2, chapter 4, Aristotle says :

‘ By the emotions I mean desire, anger, fear, courage, envy, joy, love, hatred, regret, emulation, pity — in general, whatever is attended by pleasure or pain.’ The list, while ending in an *et cetera*, can hardly be supposed to omit any emotion regarded by the author as habitual among men.

To Aristotle, almost any emotional excess is objectionable, and in need of restraint or correction. But

¹ Compare L. Dugas, *Psychologie du Rire*, Paris, 1902, pp. 166-7: ‘Le rire n’est pas un genre, mais une collection d’espèces. Il n’est pas une entité psychologique, mais une particularité qui se rencontre en des états différents et contraires. . . . Un accident . . . n’est point proprement objet de science. . . . C’est donc à une conclusion toute négative que notre étude aboutit.’

if we must find in the list two emotions equally common with pity and fear, and specially capable of relief through comedy, why not take anger and envy? Plato associates these two with comedy in the *Philebus*.¹ And Aristotle, in beginning a similar list in the *Rhetoric*, says:

‘The emotions are those things, being attended by pleasure and pain, by which men are altered in regard to their judgments — as anger, pity, fear, and the like, with their opposites.’²

Further on he notes that

‘We are placable when we are in a condition opposed to angry feeling, for example, at a time of sport or laughter or festivity’;³

and later he takes up the discussion of envy and emulation.⁴ The analysis of anger and envy in the *Rhetoric* has many points of contact with that in the *Philebus*; but we must forego the comparison. Let us observe instead that both emotions are rather constant in daily life; nearly every one cherishes at least a latent anger against some one most of the time; and the same is true of envy. They are, like pity and fear, intimately related; both are disturbing emotions; and their catharsis would amount to a form of pleasure as distinct as is the catharsis of the tragic emotions. Further, they are the chief manifestations of what we still term ‘ill humor’; the ancient theory of disquieting bodily and mental humors, an excess of which it may be desirable to purge away by specifics, thus lives on in popular linguistic usage. And Aristotle himself was thinking in terms of the Greek ‘humoral’ medicine when he marked the cathartic effect of

¹ See below, pp. 114-6.

² *Rhetoric* 2. 1.

³ *Ibid.* 2. 3.

⁴ *Ibid.* 2. 10-11.

tragedy. Now it is obvious that, if you succeed in making an angry or envious man laugh with pleasure, he ceases for a time to be angry or envious. Thus anger and envy might be said to be purged away by comedy. There can be no doubt that comedy does have an influence of the sort. And it is the outstanding facts of experience, and of dramatic art, that are uppermost in the *Poetics* of Aristotle.

It may be objected, however, that in this view the cure wrought by comedy is not, like the cure effected by tragedy, homeopathic, but, on the contrary, is allopathic. The generalized emotions of pity and fear in a tragic poem are a specific for the pity and fear of the individual in the audience ; whereas anger and envy in the individual may be removed by something very unlike them in comedy. The comic poet may represent irascible and envious men, but will not necessarily do so ; he may choose other types, as the ironical man, the braggart, and the buffoon. To this we might answer that, comedy being in many ways the reverse of tragedy, its effect may well be allopathic rather than homeopathic. The comic catharsis may be more direct, and more violent, too, than the tragic.

(3) But let us go a little deeper. Anger and envy are emotions that arise from a sense of injury or injustice, or, more generally stated, from a sense of disproportion. You have so much income, I but half as much ; the disproportion is painful to me, since I think myself quite as intelligent as you, and believe I am in various ways the better man of the two. You also, disregarding me, suffer from a mental comparison of your fortune and deserts with those of some one else. These fancied or real disproportions — and they are numberless in daily life — become oppressive as we meditate

and exaggerate them. Take us both to witness a comic drama — the *Plutus* of Aristophanes, where the universal inequalities of wealth and poverty, the accidents of distribution, are still further exaggerated on the stage, and become ludicrous to all. As the play advances, we begin to see the law of proportion in a clearer light. At the end we are free from the accumulated burden of painful emotion, are relieved of the sense of disproportion — and by a homeopathic means. Through the generalized representation the spectator loses what was before merely individual in his own experience; the painful element is gone; and a harmless pleasure has ensued.

If we admit the reality of a comic catharsis, we must grant that the effect proceeds from the use, in comedy, of dramatic suspense, and from the arousal and defeat of our expectations in various ways. The principle has a wide range of manifestations; it may show itself in the action, when the sequence of events is other than we anticipated; or in the characters, when, without belying their nature, they nevertheless surprise us; or in the course of a speech, when the argument seems to follow some sort of law, yet issues in something unexpected; or in the diction, when we await one combination of words, and meet another. The function of suspense in the tragic catharsis has been examined by an ingenious critic, who, rightly, I believe, maintains that this function is not duly reckoned with in other explanations of the Aristotelian term.¹ The function in comedy of suspense, with a cheated expectation ending in a release of mental energy,² is hinted

¹ W. D. Moriarty, *The Function of Suspense in the Catharsis*, Ann Arbor, 1911.

² See below, pp. 77-9.

at by a number of passages in Aristotle, as, for example, in the *Rhetoric* and the *Problems*.¹ The relation between suspense and surprise is much the same in comedy and tragedy; the difference grows out of the seriousness or triviality of the incidents, and out of the misery or joy of the event. In *Problems* 35.6 laughter is defined as 'a sort of surprise and deception.'

(4) In the foregoing we assume that the end of comedy is pleasure. But there is another possibility, if the definition in the Tractate is worth considering — if it has more than a superficial relation to the works of Aristotle, and particularly to the *Ethics*. According to the definition, comedy 'through pleasure and laughter' effects a 'catharsis of the said emotions.'² Now to Aristotle the end of life is not pleasure; it is a serious end.³ The highest activity of man is found in the life of philosophic contemplation, the speculative life. Such a life, of course, is not devoid of satisfaction; it is in itself the noblest and fullest satisfaction of human nature, human desire. It does not exclude harmless recreation; recreation, a sufficient activity of the emotional nature (such as comes with the artistic arousal of pity and fear in tragedy), and indeed the exercise of all our lower faculties within reasonable limits — all these are not merely countenanced by him, but encouraged. Yet in the last analysis he looks upon recreation, not as an end in itself, but as a means to an end. This end, once more, is the free play of our highest faculties in the life of contemplation. In this way he would think that comedy in providing us with its specific pleasure, and by arousing laughter,

¹ See below, pp. 146-7, 103-5

² See below, p. 228.

³ See below, p. 134.

gave occasional vent to certain passing emotional states, and thus left us free for the serious concerns of life. By comedy, then, we should be cured of a desire to laugh at the wrong time, and at the wrong things, through being made to laugh at the proper time by the right means.

These considerations, we must allow, are remote from the *Poetics*, where Aristotle is concerned with poetry in and for itself. In this work he is not concerned with the end of private life, as he is in the *Ethics*, or with the end of public life, as he is in the *Politics*, but with the end of poetry and the ends of its several species. True, he honors poetry — comedy as well as tragedy and the epic — because it is by nature philosophic and universal ; it is just as concrete as history, and yet more general. But if anything is certain about his view of comedy, it is that the comic poet must aim at producing a definite pleasure. And thus the most unlucky guess of the epitomator in the Tractate would seem to be that comedy, viewed in relation to its own end, aims at the purgation of pleasure. Yet his connection of both ' pleasure ' and ' laughter ' with the end of comedy may be helpful, as we shall see.¹

(5) It is possible, again, that Aristotle would, under different circumstances, recognize different effects of comedy ; that in one connection he would note a catharsis of troublesome emotions like anger and envy, and in another a catharsis of laughter itself. We have seen that in studying tragedy, since he is unhampered by our modern standards of consistency, but always bent on finding out what happens or should happen in a given instance, he has worked out a quite flexible theory.

¹ See below, pp. 71-6.

Thus — to revert to a familiar example — he is elastic enough to praise Euripides for his unhappy *dénouements* ; and yet, among the dramas of this author, to have the highest regard for *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, which, by avoiding the deed of horror within the family circle, produces one kind of tragic effect ; and yet finally to award the palm to Sophocles in *Oedipus the King*, which produces another. If the type of comic action known to us through Menander and Terence was sometimes or often adopted by writers of the Middle Comedy, and may go back to Crates, or even beyond him to Sicily,¹ Aristotle in any systematic treatment of comedy would hardly fail to reckon with that type, or to account for its effect ; while he certainly would not neglect the special quality of Aristophanes when this was different.

(6) With the mention of Aristophanes we return to the dual effect noted by the epitomator, in a Tractate which doubtless has this poet steadily in view.² The 'pleasure' and 'laughter' sundered in the definition may through artistic synthesis unite in one single comic effect. For example, an Aristophanic pun might be expressed in embellished language, or a ludicrous fowl might join in an enchanting chorus in the *Birds* ; the union of the two factors is illustrated both in the beautiful and the ludicrous costumes, and in the beautiful and the ludicrous metres and music, of that play. But for analytical purposes the two elements may also be considered apart.³

¹ See H. W. Prescott, *The Antecedents of Hellenistic Comedy* in *Classical Philology* 12 (1917). 405-25, esp. 421-5.

² For the relation of pleasure to laughter, see Demetrius *De Elocutione* 128-142, esp. 130, 132, 133, and 150, 151, 152, 153, 161, 163, 169.

³ Compare Sir Philip Sidney, *Defense of Poesy*, ed. by Cook, pp. 50-1. It would be interesting to trace the acute (but partly

There is some advantage in separating them, for, if I am not mistaken, editors of Aristophanes have not given attention enough to the element of beauty in the Old Comedy, or not enough in comparison with the trouble they take in explaining the purely laughable element, so that what strikes them as merely ridiculous receives disproportionate notice. If this remark is true in the case of the *Birds*, where pleasure reigns, it is even more true with reference to the other plays of the same author. As Rogers says:

‘It is perhaps natural that commentators should have taken less trouble about the *Lysistrata* than about the more widely-read comedies of Aristophanes. Yet it seems almost incredible that they should as a rule have overlooked the broad distinction, which pervades the play, between the *old* women in the orchestra and the *young* women on the stage. Indeed the latest editor, Professor Van Leeuwen, in his search after novelties, dignifies with the titles Γραῦς A, Γραῦς B, Γραῦς Γ (*First, Second, and Third Hags*) Lysistrata’s comrades whose youth and beauty are the very qualities relied upon for bringing about a termination of the war. Nor does Lysistrata herself fare much better. Notwithstanding the encomiums passed upon her personal attractiveness, notwithstanding the fact that Calonice, herself a young woman, addresses her as “child,” almost all recent editors depart from the mss., depart from the Scholiast, depart from common sense, for the sole purpose of styling her “most mannish of *grandmothers*.”’¹

It can not with equal justice be said of various translators that they miss the element of beauty in Aristophanes, since they are forced to imitate as well as

mistaken) remarks of Sidney (esp. p. 51) to *Continental*, and, notably, Italian, theories of poetry, and to follow these last back to classical sources.

¹ Rogers, *Lysistrata*, pp. xli-xlii.

they can the quality of his diction and metres. It is not wholly missing in the versions of the *Birds* by Frere and Rogers. But of Rogers as editor the criticism may be made: he does not neglect the element of 'pleasure,' but he does overemphasize the element of the ridiculous in comparison with it.

The defect is partly due to the loss, already noticed, of the music, the nature of which can but faintly be imagined from the words and metre; and to the loss of almost everything in the way of 'spectacle.' Only the slightest hints concerning the dress of the chorus in the *Birds* and the *Clouds*, for example, are to be gathered from decorations on vases, chance remarks of scholiasts, and the like.¹ For an abundance of grace and charm, the outstanding comedy should be the *Birds*, with its choral odes and solo to the Nightingale, its fantastic imagery and ethereal setting, with parti-colored Iris, messenger of the gods, and with the splendid goddess Sovereignty arrayed for her marriage with the hero. Some notion of the musical accompaniment may be gained from the instructive letter of Welch to Rogers.² But there was much of the element of 'pleasure' in other comedies, as in the *Frogs*, a comic imitation — turned toward the worse, but not debased — of the Dionysiac contests, musical and dramatic, and the Dionysiac procession, at the Athenian festival. One need not instance the possibilities of beautiful as well as ludicrous representation in the processional hymn of Aristophanes' underworld, but we may think of the chorus of *Frogs* earlier in the play. I believe it is usual to regard this latter as wholly ludicrous. Yet, to the lover of sounds in external nature, the cry of the

¹ Haigh, pp. 295-7.

² Rogers, *Birds*, pp. lxxxv-lxxxix.

single batrachian is a very musical note, and the chant of many frogs together is highly gratifying to the attentive ear. Now the ear of the Greeks, and certainly of Aristophanes, was appreciative of many natural sounds to which in modern times few save zoologists and entomologists listen with satisfaction, at least in our Western nations. It is said that the Japanese take a special delight in the cries of insects, discriminating them with a very critical taste. We do not know what instruments accompanied Aristophanes' batrachian chorus; the text of *Frogs* 228–234 may imply the use of the lyre and the flute or syrinx.

(7) The tragic poet has various means of rendering an otherwise painful story pleasing. Of these, the most obvious is metre, with the embellishments of a euphonious, elevated, and ornate diction. The adjuncts of music, dancing, and costume tend to the same purpose. The comic poet embellishes, not the painful, but the ugly, and may avail himself of the same or similar means. He may also introduce pleasing episodes, such as marriages, feasts, sportive victories, and the like, which in themselves are joyful; the preoccupation of Aristophanes with treaties of peace¹ is a sign of his dramatic instinct rather than his political tendencies. But it seems that the element of 'pleasure' in which the 'laughter' of the Old Comedy was incarnate had the function of embellishing much that would otherwise be objectionable. Through the loss of the music, and of other devices contributing to 'pleasure,' the grosser and more trying aspects of Aristophanes become unduly obvious to the modern reader.

(8) Here I do not so much allude to his occasional sharp treatment of contemporaries, though his 'attacks'

¹ See below, pp. 271–2.

upon individuals must, like his obscenity, be viewed in perspective. The Socrates of the *Clouds*, for example, a generalized representation in which the philosopher is more of a type than an individual, moved in an atmosphere of beautiful words and choral music. The aerial and fantastic setting, and the wonderful song of the Clouds, as well as the instrumental accompaniment, gave a different tone to the delineation of this character even where it had the marks of a portrait. More especially I have in mind the allusions to the reproductive and excretory functions of man. Of course we should make the usual allowance for the obscene in view of the origins of comedy in the phallic procession, and should not forget the different attitude of the pagan world to a realm of thought to which the modern author does not give free expression; though here the age of Aristophanes differed less from the age of Shakespeare than the latter does from ours, and the taste of Athens was not so remote from that of Paris as the taste of Paris is from that of Boston. But, when the usual allowance is made, we may, without holding a brief for what is gross in the Old Comedy, venture to assert that the element of beauty with which that grossness was combined made a difference in the total effect of the play. If the catharsis involved in laughter has something to do with the reproductive and excretory functions, with our thoughts about them, or with the subconscious or unconscious aspects of them, then the element of 'pleasure,' to which beauties of structure, of persons, of diction and metre, of melody and 'spectacle,' contribute, plays its part in this catharsis. In this way we may be able to explain a riddle in the Tractate, where the epitomator remarks of some previous writer on Aristotle or else of Aristotle himself:

' [He says] that it [tragedy] aims at having a *symmetry* [συμμετρία, 'due proportion'] of fear'; and, as the Tractate later puts it: 'As in tragedies there should be a due proportion of fear, so in comedies there should be a due proportion of laughter.'¹ By 'symmetry' we may perhaps understand 'reduction to measure' from excess. The combination of beauty with the lower forms of the ludicrous gives rise to a catharsis differing from the effect of the obscene when unalloyed. Thus art follows nature. Reproduction and excretion are in nature and life united with beauty; and comedy is an idealized representation of all the elements in life and nature.

But for the ends of analysis, as we have said, the purgation involved in laughter may be considered apart from the embellishments; not, of course, apart from pleasure in a wide sense, for the release of energy in laughter may be the chief constituent in the pleasure of comedy.

Herewith we reach the point where a modern discussion of laughter may possibly aid in reconstructing an Aristotelian theory. The explanation of the comic by Freud in the main is a theory of catharsis; to a large extent the Freudian theory is concerned with the sexual and excretory functions of man, with the inhibition of desire, and with its release in channels sometimes more, sometimes less, obscure or indirect. Freud tends to reduce all the phenomena of desire to manifestations of the sexual *libido*, instead of regarding desire (after the fashion of Plato, Aristotle, and Dante) as an inclusive term, and *libido* as one main species under it; he does not even recognize that the instinct of self-preservation is primary, and *libido* secondary to that.

¹ See below, pp. 224, 226, 228, 262; cf. Kayser, pp. 30-1.

I shall not enter into the details of the Freudian theory ; on the present topic the reader may consult them in the volume called *Wit and its Relation to the Unconscious* ;¹ we must here be content with a few citations from this.

Freud himself cites Herbert Spencer on the psychological situation which discharges itself in laughter, and then quotes Alexander Bain on 'Laughter a relief from restraint,' and Dugas² to the effect that laughter is a '*détente*,' 'a manifestation of release from tension.'

Freud then explains :

'We would say that laughter arises when the sum total of psychic energy, formerly used for the occupation of certain psychic channels, has become unutilizable, so that it can experience absolute discharge.'³

Further :

'And since not all laughter (but surely the laughter of wit) is a sign of pleasure, we shall be inclined to refer this pleasure to the release of previously existing static energy. . . . When we see that the hearer of the witticism laughs, while the creator of the same can not, then that must indicate that in the hearer a sum of damming energy has been released and discharged, whereas during the wit-formation, either in the release or in the discharge, inhibitions resulted. One can characterize the psychic process in the hearer, in the third person of the witticism, hardly more pointedly than by asserting that he has bought the pleasure of the witticism with very little expenditure on his part. One might say that it is presented to him.'⁴

And finally :

'The comical appears primarily as an unintentional discovery in the social relations of human beings. It is found in persons, that is, in their movements, shapes, actions, and characteristic traits. (In the beginning it

¹ Translated by A. A. Brill, New York, 1916.

² See above, p. 65 f. n.

³ Freud, p. 226.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 228-9.

is found probably only in their physical¹ peculiarities, and later on in their mental qualities, especially in the expression of these latter. Even animals and inanimate objects become comical as the result of a widely-used method of personification.²

If we apply Freud's theory to the drama — an application he does not make,³ — we may obtain some such result as follows. (In Aristotelian terms, comedy provides for the audience a harmless discharge of emotions which, when pent up within the individual, occasion various sorts of distress or irregular and imperfect activity. Comedy, like the Roman Catholic confessional, affords an outlet for disturbing emotion, and for disquieting remembrances that lie, sometimes festering, at the bottom of the soul.)

The excerpts from Freud may be supplemented by the effective summary of Croce, who is sceptical, however, of generalizations regarding the comic, and finds repose only in the individual artistic fact :

‘The comic has been defined as the displeasure arising from the perception of a deformity immediately followed by a greater pleasure arising from the relaxation of our psychical forces, which were strained in anticipation of a perception whose importance was foreseen. (While listening to a narrative, which, for example, should describe the magnificent and heroic purpose of a definite person, we anticipate in imagination the occurrence of an action both heroic and magnificent, and we prepare ourselves to receive it, by straining our psychic forces. If, however, in a moment, instead of the magnificent and heroic action, which the premises and the tone of the narrative had led us to expect, by an unexpected change there occur a slight, mean,

¹ In the German : *körperlichen* ; the American translation reads ‘psychical’ — an obvious misprint.

² Freud, p. 302.

³ Dugas, however, has an interesting section on the aesthetic function of laughter (*Psychologie du Rire*, pp. 159-65).

foolish action, unequal to our expectation, we have been deceived, and the recognition of the deceit brings with it an instant of displeasure. But this instant is as it were overcome by the one immediately following, in which we are able to discard our strained attention, to free ourselves from the provision of psychic energy accumulated and henceforth superfluous, to feel ourselves reasonable and relieved of a burden. This is the pleasure of the comic, with its physiological equivalent, laughter. If the unpleasant fact that has occurred should painfully affect our interests, pleasure would not arise, laughter would be at once choked, the psychic energy would be strained and overstrained by other more serious perceptions. If, on the other hand, such more serious perceptions do not arise, if the whole loss be limited to a slight deception of our foresight, then the supervening feeling of our psychic wealth affords ample compensation for this very slight displeasure. — This, stated in a few words, is one of the most accurate modern definitions of the comic. It boasts of containing, justified or corrected, the manifold attempts to define the comic, from Hellenic antiquity to our own day. It includes Plato's dictum in the *Philebus*, and Aristotle's, which is more explicit. The latter looks upon the comic as an *ugliness without pain*. It contains the theory of Hobbes, who placed it in the feeling of *individual superiority*; of Kant, who saw in it a *relaxation of tension*; and those of other thinkers, for whom it was *the contrast between great and small, between the finite and the infinite*. But, on close observation, the analysis and definition above given, although most elaborate and rigorous in appearance, yet enunciates [*sic*] characteristics which are applicable, not only to the comic, but to every spiritual process; such as the succession of painful and agreeable moments and the satisfaction arising from the consciousness of force and of its free development. The differentiation here given is that of quantitative determinations, to which limits cannot be assigned. They remain vague phrases, attaining to some meaning from their reference to this or that single comic fact.

If such definitions be taken too seriously, there happens to them what Jean Paul Richter said of all the definitions of the comic: namely, that their sole merit is *to be themselves comic*, and to produce, in reality, the fact which they vainly try to define logically. And who will ever determine logically the dividing line between the comic and the non-comic, between smiles and laughter, between smiling and gravity; who will cut into clearly divided parts that ever-varying continuity into which life melts? ¹

One may rejoine: Why distinguish, as Croce has just done, between the conceptions of Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, Kant, and 'other thinkers'? Human analysis, like the rest of human art (including comedy), is imperfect — that is, less successful, and more successful. There are better theories of comedy, and worse. The analysis set forth by Croce is worth while, if only to the student of Aristotle.

(9) One other modern theory we may barely refer to, that of George Meredith. Among modern literary critics this writer has the distinction of singling out the effect of comedy upon the audience, and the right sort of audience, as the true criterion of comic excellence. His emphasis so far is like that of Aristotle. Meredith, however, describes the effect as if it were, or should be, chiefly intellectual rather than emotional, thus: 'To touch and kindle the mind through laughter.'² And when he demands, as a final 'test of true comedy,' that it shall 'awaken thoughtful laughter,'³ the restriction is too narrow. Writers from Aristophanes to Shakespeare and Molière have employed every sort of means to arouse laughter — lofty wit, and naughty as well, — tending only to avoid what is painful or

¹ Croce. *Aesthetic*, trans. by Ainslie, pp. 148-51.

² See my edition of Meredith, *An Essay on Comedy and the Uses of the Comic Spirit*, New York, 1918, p. 76.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

corrupting. But the preference of Meredith reminds one of the supposed preference of Aristotle for comic 'innuendo.'

That the effect of comedy includes more than a stirring of the mind we may gather from the comic poet whom Meredith calls most successful. Molière, who reveals his own opinion through some of the speakers in *La Critique de l'École des Femmes*, evidently thinks that for him 'the great art is that of pleasing.'¹ And he clearly regards the accessories of music and dancing as very important.² The attempt to make the honorable public laugh is not altogether an affair of the mind: 'Il y faut plaisanter; et c'est une étrange entreprise que celle de faire rire les honnêtes gens.'³ Yet, as the *Critique* shows, conscious art is a necessary adjunct to natural gift in the poet. Further, for Molière, comedy has a sanative effect. So Uranie judges with regard to *L'École des Femmes*: 'As for me, I find that comedy more capable of curing people than of making them ill.'⁴ To the same purport Clitandre, as he introduces the element of song, instrumental music, and dance at the close of *L'Amour Médecin*: 'These are persons that I bring with me, whom I constantly employ to quiet [*pacifier*] with their harmony and their dances the troubles of the soul.' Whereupon the personages of 'Comedy,' 'The Ballet,' and 'Music' sing as follows:

Sans nous, tous les hommes
Deviendraient malsains,
Et c'est nous qui sommes
Leurs grands médecins.

¹ Speech of Dorante, scene 7.

² See the *Avertissement* to *Les Facheux*.

³ Another speech of Dorante, as above.

⁴ *La Critique* [etc.], scene 3.

Then 'Comedy' in a solo tells us that, if we wish by gentle means to reduce the splenic vapors that prey upon us all, we must come to her and her companions :

Veut-on qu'on rabatte
Par des moyens doux,
Les vapeurs de rate
Qui vous minent tous ?
Qu'on laisse Hippocrate,
Et qu'on vienne à nous.¹

Perhaps the genius of Molière has here, out of experience and observation, as well as from a considerable knowledge of poetic theory, actually hit upon the Aristotelian notion of the comic catharsis, or something very near it.

(10) It has been remarked that we have no unmistakable vestiges of a theory of comic catharsis by Aristotle, or of a definition of comedy by him implying such catharsis.² We realize that any views he may have had on the subject are for us problematical; and any opinion we may form concerning them is wholly inferential. However, in addition to the evidence in the Tractate and similar documents on comedy, there are other indications of an ancient theory of the effect of comedy, and of a comic catharsis, which may or may not heighten the probability that Aristotle discussed the question.

In the work now known as *De Mysteriis*, doubtfully attributed to Iamblichus (died *circa* A. D. 330), the author, having alluded to the phallus as symbolic of 'the generative energy of the world,' proceeds :

'Most of these things [phalli, in particular] are consecrated in the spring, because the whole world then receives from the gods the power which is productive of all generation; and I take it the obscene language that is uttered indicates the privation of the beautiful in the

¹ *L'Amour Médecin* 3. 7, 8.

² See above, p. 64.

world of matter, and the previous deformity of all things that are to be variously adorned; for, these material things being in need of adornment, they long for it the more, the more they despise their own uncomeliness. Again, therefore, they pursue after the causes of specific forms and of the beautiful, since from the mention of ugly things they perceive the ugly; and although they avoid the doing of deeds that are ugly, they manifest their knowledge thereof through the words, and transfer their longing to the opposite of the ugly.

‘These things afford still another argument, as follows. The forces of the human emotions in us, if entirely restrained, bestir themselves more vehemently; while if stirred into action but gradually and within measure, they rejoice moderately and are satisfied; and, thus purified, they become obedient, and are checked without violence. It is on this account that, when we witness the emotions of others, in both comedy and tragedy, we halt our own emotions, work them off more moderately, and are purged of them. In the sacred ceremonies also, by certain spectacles and by hearing things that are ugly, we are released from the harm that would come from the deeds themselves.

‘Things of this sort, therefore, are introduced for the cure of our soul, and in order to moderate the evils adhering to the soul through generation, and also to loose and release it from its bonds. And on this account Heraclitus very properly terms them ‘cures,’ meaning that they will cure dreadful ailments, and render the soul free from the calamities incident to generation.’¹

Proclus Diadochus (A. D. 410–85), in his commentary on the *Republic* of Plato, seems to have in mind the *Poetics* of Aristotle at first or second hand, but his allusion to a catharsis of comedy may proceed from the other ‘champions’ of tragedy and comedy; that is, it may or may not point to a discussion of a comic catharsis in Aristotle:

¹ Iamblichus *De Mysteriis* 1 11, ed. by Parthey, 1857, pp. 38–40.

‘ We must tell, . . . secondly, why, in particular he [Plato] does not admit [into the ideal State] comedy and tragedy; and that, too, when they contribute to a purgation of those emotions which it is neither possible wholly to choke in, nor yet safe to gratify completely, since they in fact require a movement, as it were, at the proper time, and this movement, being effected when we hear a recital of these emotions, renders us undisturbed by them for the rest of the time. . . .

‘ As for the second problem: this was his rejection of tragedy and comedy — an absurd rejection if it be true that, through these, [the players] can measurably satisfy the emotions, and in thus satisfying them render good service to the cause of education by healing what is painful in those emotions. Be that as it may, although this rejection has afforded ample grounds of complaint both to Aristotle and to the champions of these forms of poetry against the arguments of Plato, I for my part shall, in accordance with my previous utterances, solve the problem somewhat as follows. Everything that tends to imitate all sorts of characters is most alien to the induction of youth into virtue; since through its imitation it enters into the thoughts of the hearers, and also through its artful diversity becomes hurtful to them; for, whatsoever be the things imitated, such must be the one who is peculiarly sensitive to the imitation become. For virtue is simple, and very like to God himself, to whom we say the term unity is especially appropriate. So, then, the person who would become like to such a one must flee from the life that is opposed to simplicity, and therefore it will be necessary to purge him of all diversity; and, if so, it will also be necessary for him when he is a youth, and when because of his youth he is impressible, to stand utterly aloof from all pursuits that drag him down into diversity. Clearly, then, we should beware of both tragedy and comedy, since they imitate all sorts of characters, and assault the hearers with pleasure; lest what is seductive in them drag into accord that in the soul which is easy to seduce, and thus fill up the life of the children with the evils which the imitation effects; and lest, instead of the

measurable purgation appertaining to the emotions, these forms of poetry beget in their souls a bias that is evil and hard to cleanse away, since that bias causes the traits of unity and simplicity to disappear, and from the fondness for all sorts of imitations their souls are stamped with the opposite impressions. Moreover, since these two kinds of poetry notably reach out toward that in the soul which is most exposed to the emotions — comedy rousing in us the love of pleasure and drawing us into absurd bursts of laughter, tragedy fostering in us the love of grief and dragging us down to ignoble outbursts of tears, and each of them nourishing the emotional element in us, and so much the more as each accomplishes its special function; therefore I, too, say that the statesman should devise excretions, as it were, of these emotions, yet not in such a way as to intensify the special passions connected with them, but on the contrary to curb these passions, and in a suitable way to regulate their movements. But since, after all, those forms of poetry, in addition to their diversity, lack measure in their appeals to these emotions, they are far from being useful for purgation; for purgations consist, not in excessive movements, but in contracted actions which have but a slight resemblance to those emotions of which they purge.¹

It is tantalizing to have Proclus just miss divulging whether or not he actually knew of an Aristotelian comic catharsis. Other hints of a theory respecting the end of comedy — one that may have originated with Aristotle or his immediate successors — are found in the treatises edited by Kaibel. Thus the scholiast (either Melampus, of the third century A. D., or Diomedes, of the fourth) on Dionysius Thrax (*circa* B. C. 170–90) remarks:

‘And the aim of tragedy is to move the hearers to tears, while the aim of comedy is to move them to

¹ Proclus *Diadochus In Platonis Rem Publicam* 360, 362, ed. by Kroll, I 42, 49–50.

laughter. Wherefore, they say, tragedy dissolves life, and comedy consolidates it.¹

Again, John Tzetzes (*circa* A. D. 1110–1180) has caught up the following :

‘Comedy is an imitation of an action, . . . purgative of emotions, constructive of life, moulded by laughter and pleasure. Tragedy differs from comedy in that tragedy has a story and a report of things [or ‘deeds’] that are past, although it represents them as taking place in the present, but comedy embraces fictions of the affairs of everyday life ; and in that the aim of tragedy is to move the hearers to lamentation, while the aim of comedy is to move them to laughter.’²

Another passage from the same Tzetzes reads :

‘The peculiar characteristic of comedy is the mixture of laughter with gibes, while tragedy has sorrow and misfortunes. The characteristic of the satyr-drama is not a change from grief to joy (as, for example, in the *Orestes* and *Alcestis* of Euripides, and the *Electra* of Sophocles in part), as some say, but it has unmixed and joyous and boisterous laughter.’³

And a final one from Tzetzes, who has gathered from various sources :

‘The comic poet, ridiculing in his comedies some plunderer and evil-doer and pestilent fellow, for the rest settles all into decorum. Thus tragedy dissolves life, while comedy founds it firmly, and renders it solid, as does the satyr-drama together with comedy, being compounded of gloom and joy.’⁴

The inconsistency of Tzetzes need not detain us ; he put together his scraps of information in his own uncritical way. The last passage begins with a statement which we find also in Horace (B. c. 65–8), and which probably came to him from an Alexandrian writer.⁵

¹ Kaibel, p. 14

² *Ibid.*, p. 17 ; see below, p. 287.

³ Kaibel, p. 21.

⁴ Kaibel, pp. 36–7

⁵ Horace, *Satires* I. 4 1–5.

But Horace, in whose criticism we should expect to find something on the emotional function of comedy, if a definite Greek theory was known to his time, gives us nothing to build on in this particular; even his knowledge of Aristotle on tragedy comes to him at second or third hand. Cicero (B. C. 106–43) refers to the theorists on laughter in a slighting manner that he would hardly use if he were acquainted with a comic catharsis in Aristotle. But he is familiar with certain doctrines of the *Poetics*, seemingly in a more extended form than we now possess, and with distinctions which we find in the *Tractatus Coislinianus*. Of course he is familiar, too, with the Aristotelian Rhetoric. Indeed, being preoccupied with rhetorical theory and practice, he makes a distinction which we must not fail to observe, between what is suitable to forensic eloquence, and what to comedy proper :

‘In regard to laughter, there are five points for investigation; first, what it is; secondly, whence it arises; thirdly, whether it behoves the orator to provoke laughter; fourthly, to what extent; fifthly, what are the several species of the ridiculous. As to the first, what laughter is: by what means it is raised, wherein it consists, in what manner it bursts out, and is so suddenly discharged that, though we were willing, we have no power to stifle it, and in what manner it all at once takes possession of our sides, our mouth, our veins, our eyes, our countenance — let Democritus explain all that. They are not to my present purpose, and if they were, I should not at all be ashamed to say that I did not know them; for even they who pretend to account for them know nothing of the matter. But the place and, as it were, the province of the ridiculous (for that is the next question) lies within the limits of ugliness and a certain deformity; for those expressions are alone, or especially, ridiculous which disclose and represent some ugliness in a not unseemly fashion.

But, to come to the third point, it is evidently an orator's business to provoke a laugh . . . above all because it softens or unbends sorrow and severity. . . . Neither an eminent or flagitious villain nor a wretch remarkably harassed with misfortunes is the proper subject of ridicule. . . . (59) Moderation, therefore, is chiefly to be observed in matters of wit. And the objects ~~that are most easily played upon are those that deserve neither great detestation nor the greatest compassion.~~ Hence it happens that ~~the whole subject of the ridiculous lies in the moral vices of men who are neither beloved nor miserable, nor deserving to be dragged to punishment for their crimes.~~ . . . Deformity and bodily defects are likewise happy enough subjects for ridicule. But let us consider what ought to be the main object of investigation in other respects — how far we ought to go. Here we must make it a rule to do nothing insipidly, nor to act like a buffoon. An orator must avoid both extremes; he must not make his jests too abusive nor too buffoonish. . . . There are two kinds of humor; one arising from the thing, the other from the diction. . . . (61) There is no kind of wit, in which severe and serious things may not be derived from the subject. And we must take note also that not everything that is ludicrous is refined wit. What can be more ludicrous than a buffoon [*sannio*]? His mouth, his face, his mimicry, his voice, in short his whole body, is laughter itself. I might call him witty, but then his wit is of that kind which I would recommend, not to an orator, but to a player. (62) When a laugh therefore is raised by this first kind, which is the greatest source of laughter, and consists in representing the morose, the superstitious, the suspicious, the vaunting, the foolish, it is not owing to our wit, for these qualities are in their own nature ridiculous.¹

¹ Cicero *De Oratore* 2. (58) 235 - (62) 251; I have altered the translation (1847) in *The Classical Library*, No. 37. See the whole passage on the laughable, *De Oratore* 2. (54) 216 - (71) 289, esp. 235, 238, 239, 248, 251, 264, 266; cf. *Orator* (26) 87-90.

Cicero's allusion to Democritus, the 'laughing philosopher,' leads nowhither; and his earlier reference to 'certain books in Greek' (apparently several alike entitled *On the Laughable*), from which Caesar had no hope of learning anything,¹ is scarcely more useful — though Theophrastus is said to have produced a work of that name.² For much of his thought Cicero is indebted to post-classical Greek scholars such as Panaetius (B. C. 189–109), who came to Rome about B. C. 146.³ It is impossible to draw a sharp line between what he owes to Aristotle and what he has absorbed from Panaetius and other late authorities. His restriction of the ludicrous within the province of 'ugliness and a certain deformity,' directly or indirectly takes us to the *Poetics*,⁴ but his brief treatment of comic characters is fuller and more precise than the general statements we now find in that work. His two sources of the ludicrous — from things, and from the diction — appear also in the *Tractatus Coislinianus*.⁵ His final list of comic characters reminds one of the sketches in Theophrastus and the personages of the New Comedy, but probably emanates also from literary critics. A well-read critic himself, who assimilated all the learning of his age, and was grounded in the writings of the Socratics, Cicero in this passage no doubt combines elements from several or many originals, unless he borrowed from a theorist who had already combined them. But he has ~~nothing to give us on the effect of~~ comedy in an Aristotelian sense. In him we are no

¹ *De Oratore* 2. (54) 217.

² Diogenes Laertius 5. (2) 46.

³ See G. C. Fiske, *The Plain Style in the Scipionic Circle*, in *Classical Studies in Honor of Charles Forster Smith*, Madison, Wis., 1919, pp. 62–105, esp. pp. 71–8.

⁴ See below, p. 176.

⁵ See below, pp. 224–5.

nearer to the main object of our search than in Proclus, perhaps not so near as in Tzetzes and the Tractate. For other chance hints in Aristotle himself the reader must turn to the Scattered Passages on Laughter at the end of the Introduction.¹ Here, then, we take leave of this part of our inquiry, without having reached a very positive conclusion.

But as Cicero embraces both Platonic and Aristotelian doctrines, and mediates between them, I can lead up to the next topic (Aristotle and Plato on Comedy) by citing from him a few other passages.

These all concern Aristophanes. The modern scholar who talks of 'Aristotle's condemnation of Old Comedy' will also inform us that the same condemnation 'did not prevail generally among later theorists and critics,'² and will thus account for the unexpectedly favorable attitude of Cicero to the elder poet. But we have seen that Aristotle nowhere condemns the comedy of Aristophanes.³ The view of Cicero, that the Old Comedy is the representative of the liberal and refined style of wit, is rather an argument for a continuous tradition, beginning with Aristotle, or even with Plato, in favor of Aristophanes. The reference to the latter in the *Poetics*, if it shows nothing else, shows that his supremacy in his kind is already a commonplace in literary criticism. The Plutarchian *Abstract of a Comparison between Aristophanes and Menander*, giving the preference to Menander, is necessarily later than Aristotle, and, if it be earlier than Plutarch, yet comes from a new stream of thought that arose after critics had begun to work on the New Comedy. The new stream ob-

¹ See below, pp. 162-5.

² See Fiske (who cites Hendrickson), p. 84.

³ See above, p. 21; compare below, pp. 155-7.

viously runs counter to an established tradition, which nevertheless prevails down to Tzetzes and the Tractate, and extends to our own day. The reason why it has prevailed lies in the transcendent genius of Aristophanes. All through the scholiasts, commentators, and critical treatises, the New Comedy takes second place; for the most part the criticism of it is a kind of appendage to the criticism of the Old, save in Roman writers mainly dealing with Latin comedy, and with Terence in particular.

For Cicero, 'Comedy is an imitation of life, a mirror of custom, an image of truth'¹; — as, according to Aristotle, Alcidas called the *Odyssey* 'a fair mirror of human life.'² And Cicero links comedy with the dialogues of Plato and others:

'There are, generally speaking, two sorts of jest: the one, coarse, rude, vicious, indecent; the other, refined, polite, clever, witty. With this latter sort not only our own Plautus and the Old Comedy of Athens, but also the books of Socratic philosophy abound.'³

Among the poets of the Old Comedy, Aristophanes is easily first. His *modus* is *suavis* and *gravis*, and Cicero notes in writing to his brother Quintus:

'Your letter, which he had a little before received, he gave to me to read — a letter in the Aristophanic manner, highly delightful and highly serious, I declare! I was tremendously pleased with it.'⁴

No wonder, when Aristophanes was 'the wittiest poet of the Old Comedy,'⁵ and distinctly preferable to

¹ Quoted by Donatus *De Comoedia*, in Kaibel, p. 67.

² Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 3. 3, thinks this metaphor unsuited to the style of an oration.

³ Cicero *De Officiis* 1. (29) 104, trans. by Miller, p. 107.

⁴ Cicero *Ad Quintum Fratrem* 3. 1. (6) 19.

⁵ *De Legibus* 2. (15) 37.

Eupolis.¹ Cicero has even got a little of the *Acharnians* (659-61) by heart, though not very accurately.² His interest in Aristophanes is, of course, the interest of an orator; perhaps the best parallel to it is found in the *Institutio Oratoria* of Quintilian, who says:

‘The Old Comedy retains, almost alone, the pure grace of Attic diction, and the charm of a most eloquent freedom of language; and though it is chiefly employed in attacking follies, yet it has great force in other departments; for it is sublime, elegant, and graceful; and I know not whether any poetry, next to Homer’s (whom it is always right to except, as he himself excepts Achilles), has either a greater resemblance to oratory, or is better adapted for forming orators. The authors of it are numerous; but Aristophanes, Eupolis, and Cratinus are the principal.’³

And here we may add excerpts from another passage in Quintilian that betray his dependence, direct or indirect, upon Plato and Aristotle, and upon other Greek writers more nearly of his own time, but probably dealing with the subject of the laughable in connection with rhetoric rather than comedy. Of his debts to Latin writers, that to Cicero is the greatest. Quintilian, like Plato, sees a relation between laughter and the emotions of anger and hate or envy; like Aristotle, he remarks upon the pleasantries suited and unsuited to the man of refinement; and he gives us the same distinction as that found in the *Tractatus Coislinianus* between laughter arising from the *diction* and laughter arising from the *things*.⁴ He naturally takes much of his oratorical theory from Cicero:

¹ *Ad Atticum* 12. 6. 3.

² *Ibid.* 8. 8. 2. See also *Orator* (9) 29.

³ Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 10. 1. 65-6, trans. by Watson, 2. 260-1.

⁴ See below, pp. 224-5.

‘ Very different from this [the power of arousing compassion] is the talent which, by exciting laughter in the judge, dispels melancholy affections, diverting his mind from too intense application to the subject before it, recruiting at times its powers, and reviving it after disgust and fatigue. . . .

‘ But the chief difficulty in respect to jesting comes from this, that a saying adapted to excite laughter generally contains a logical fallacy, is often purposely lowered toward the worse, and never made nobler ; and men’s reaction to it will be varied, because we appreciate a jest, not by any rational process, but by a mental impulse that perhaps can not be defined. At all events, although many have attempted an explanation, I think it has never been adequately explained whence laughter arises, which is excited not only by deed or word, but sometimes even by bodily touch. Furthermore, laughter is not habitually produced by a single cause ; for not merely witty and agreeable utterances and actions are laughed at, but stupid, angry, and timid ones as well, and hence the ludicrous has no fixed origin, for *risus* is not remote from *derisu*. Thus, as Cicero says, the ridiculous ‘ has its seat in a certain deformity and ugliness,’ and if these are made to appear in others the result is called raillery, while if they recoil upon the speakers it is called folly.

‘ Though laughter seems like a trifle, and is something that may be aroused by buffoons, mimics, and often even by fools, yet it has a power perhaps more despotic than anything else, and one that is well-nigh irresistible ; for it bursts forth in people not seldom against their will, and forces expression not merely through voice and features, but shakes the whole body with its vigor. And, as I have said, it often changes the tendency of the greatest affairs, as it very frequently dissipates hatred and anger [*odium iramque*]. . . .

‘ Now as to this talent, whatever it is, I should not, of course, venture to say that it is wholly independent of art ; for it may to some extent be cultivated by observation, and rules concerning it have been put together by Greek and Latin writers both. And yet

I distinctly affirm that in the main it depends on nature and opportunity. . . . Still there would be no harm in collecting exercises for the purpose ; fictitious causes might be pleaded with an admixture of jests ; or particular theses might be proposed to the pupil for practice of this sort. Even those pleasantries (jokes as they are, and are called) which we are accustomed to utter on days of festal license might, with the addition of a little method, or with the admixture of some element of the serious, prove of no small utility to the orator ; as it is, they are merely a diversion of youth or of men at play. . . .

‘ But the proper field of the matter we are now discussing is the laughable, and accordingly the whole subject is entitled by the Greeks *περὶ γελοίου*. The first way of dividing this subject is the one that pertains to discourse as a whole, according as the laughable is found in *things* and *words*. But the application certainly is triple : we try to raise a laugh at others, or at ourselves, or at affairs that are neutral. What proceeds from others we either blame, or refute, or make light of, or rebut, or elude. As to what concerns ourselves, we remark on the laughable, and, to use a phrase from Cicero, utter *subabsurda* ; for the same things which, if they fell from us inadvertently, would be foolish are, when simulated, deemed amusing. The third class, as Cicero says, consists in cheated expectations, when things are said in one way and taken in another, and the like ; since neither person is concerned, I call such matters “neutral.” Further, we either *do* or *say* laughable things. . . .

‘ But it makes a difference *where* we indulge in jests. In social intercourse and daily talk less delicacy is allowable to the humbler class of mankind, amusing discourse to all. . . . To an orator, distorted features and the gestures it is our habit to laugh at in mimics are wholly unsuited. So with scurrilous jests from the comic stage ; they are absolutely out of character in him. As for obscenity, he should avoid it not only in word, but in allusion. . . .

‘ I may say that laughter is educed either from the corporal peculiarities of him against whom we speak, or from his *ethos*, which is to be gathered from his acts and utterances, or from external circumstances relating to him. . . .

‘ But as there are innumerable topics from which jokes may be drawn, I must repeat that they are not all suited to orators. Unsuitable, first, are jokes arising from ambiguities; and similarly, obscene jests such as are usually aimed at in Atellan comedy; and again, such as are bandied about by individuals of the lowest class, when ambiguities are promptly turned into personal abuse. . . . Nor do ambiguous terms always only signify several things; they may signify things of the most diverse sorts. . . .

‘ This kind of jest is as poor as is the formation of names by adding, subtracting, or altering letters — as, for example, . . . turning the name Placidus into “Acidus,” because the man had a sour disposition. . . .

‘ Those jokes are more choice and pointed which draw their force from external circumstances. Here resemblance is of the utmost value, especially if it can be turned toward the worse and more trivial object. The ancients were given to this sort of pleasantry, calling Lentulus “Spinther” and Scipio “Serapion.” Such jokes are derived, however, not only from human beings but from animals as well. . . . This mode of exciting laughter is now very common. Such comparisons are sometimes made openly, sometimes insinuated through a parallel. . . . Still more ingenious is the application of one thing to another because of a similarity between them, when we attribute to this case what commonly happens in that. . . .

‘ Are not many jokes made through the use of hyperbole? For example, Cicero says of a very tall man that “he had struck his head against the arch of Fabius.” . . . As for irony, is it not, when employed very gravely, a species of jesting? . . .

‘ The subject includes all figures of thought — σχήματα διανοίας, as they are called, — into which some authorities divide the modes of spoken utterance; for we ask

questions, and express doubt, and affirm, and threaten, and wish, and we say some things in the mode of compassion, and others in the mode of anger. But everything is laughable that is obviously pretended. . . .

'To joke upon oneself is hardly fit for any one but a buffoon, and is by no means allowable in an orator. It may be done in as many ways as we jest at others, and accordingly, in spite of its frequent occurrence, I will not discuss it. And whatever is said scurrilously or in passion, however laughable, is unfit for a refined gentleman. . . .

'There remains to be noticed the kind of joke that consists in a deceived expectation, or when words are meant to be taken in one way, and we take them in another; and these are the happiest of all. . . .

'As for *subabsurda*, they consist in a pretence of folly, and would, if not pretended, be foolish. . . .

'So far as I have learnt from others or discovered for myself, the foregoing are the most usual sources from which jests may be derived.'¹

He has learnt much from the Aristotelian Rhetoric at first or second hand; and he has much in common with the Tractate; but his view of laughter is, first, ethical rather than mimetic, and, secondly and mainly, forensic. The moral, utilitarian view of Cicero, Quintilian, and the Romans in general, has been ably set forth by Fiske in his treatment of satire, with its mixture, 'now grave, now gay,' and its position in 'the larger literary family of the σπουδαιογέλοιον,' the common object of which is 'to convey philosophic truth under cover of a jest.' The 'Socratic books' were the best models for the satire, 'which should be easy and not too aggressive, and should have the spice of wit.' The tone of the conversation 'should vary with the subject'; herein 'lies the psychological justi-

¹ Translated from Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, ed. by Radermacher, 6. 3. 1, 6-9, 11, 15-6, 22-5, 28, 29, 37, 46-7, 50, 53, 57, 58-9, 61, 67, 68, 70, 82-3, 84, 99, 101.

fication for the apparently informal, yet subtly artistic, development of the *σπουδαιογέλοιον* by the Greek Cynics and Stoics, and by the Roman satirists, their successors.' But 'a sharp distinction must be made between the province of humor and that of invective.' Thus 'the spirit of the Old Comedy, . . . in distinction from the spirit animating the iambic verses of Archilochus, or the poetry of Hipponax,' may be classed with the spirit of the *σπουδαιογέλοιον* in 'the later popular Cynic and Stoic philosophers,' who constantly traced their descent from the Old Comedy. But 'perhaps it would be more correct to say that the Old Comedy was the precursor of the Socratic literature,' to the tone of which Cynicism owed so much. In Horace, *Satire* I.10.10-16, we see that 'the Old Comedy has a style, now . . . *tristis*, now suggestive of the rhetorical and poetical, now *acer* — all words associated with the seriousness of the grand style, — but now *iocosus*, *urbanus*, and *ridiculus*, that is, smacking of true comic informality, ease, and charm.' And the latter qualities are associated with the conception of the ironical man (*ὁ εἰρων*), 'because Socrates best realized in actual life this type of humor, a type bound up with the conception of the plain style from the days of Socrates and Plato on.' Naturally, therefore, Cicero (in the *Orator* 60) 'distinctly indicates Plato as the master of this style and its appropriate type of humor' ('*et gravitate et suavitate princeps*'). And in accordance with the practice of Latin literary criticism — that is, 'of seeking national parallels to the representative writers of Greek literary forms' — Plautus 'is regarded by Cicero as the Latin representative of the type of liberal humor affected by the Old Comedy.'¹ Language unfit

¹ Fiske, pp. 77, 79, 85-6.

for a gentleman is discovered by Cicero, not in Aristophanes, but, as by Cicero's authority, Panaetius, in 'such coarse and careless Cynic or Stoic predecessors as Diogenes the Cynic, Zeno, or Chrysippus.' Panaetius 'assails the aesthetic and moral coarseness of Cynic speech which sins equally against linguistic propriety and social decency.'¹

X

ARISTOTLE AND PLATO ON COMEDY

In Cicero we have the chief exponent at Rome of Aristotelian, and still more of Platonic, doctrines. We may now consider more fully a topic on one side of which we have touched before in a passing allusion to Plato and Aristophanes.² As we have seen in the foregoing section, any reconstruction of Aristotle's views on the specific end of comedy is tentative; and hence an estimate of the similarities and differences between his views and those of his master, Plato, on the general tendency and value of this form of drama, must likewise in many respects be problematical. Yet here, as there, we are not without some means of forming a judgment, and various important details are reasonably or quite certain. We should expect similarities as well as differences; and such there are. But before investigating either, we may sum up the ancient theories of the laughable in writers before Plato. I quote from Miss Grant, who has studied the subject in the pre-Socratic philosophers:

'To summarize these fragments of the early philosophers, we may say that in general they illustrate

¹ Fiske, pp. 75, 73.

² See above, pp. 38-9.

conventional morality of conduct as regards friendship, self-control in anger, and avoidance of evil-speaking and slander. A theory of the laughable is not definitely formulated, but there are suggestions which later find an important place in the theory, such as the necessity of relaxation and laughter as a preparation for serious pursuits, avoidance of excess in laughter, condemnation of laughter directed at the unfortunate, necessity for the reformer to be free from serious faults himself. The philosophic attitude of laughter at the faults of mankind is illustrated in the character of Democritus, while in several of the fragments the typical reaction of the people toward the jester, evil-speaker, and reformer is shown.¹

And for another preliminary step we may use the summary of Miss Grant regarding the conceptions found in Plato himself :

‘ In these passages of Plato, several important ideas are brought forward : the kinship of the ridiculous with what is morally or physically faulty ; the justification of laughter as a means of understanding serious things, and the beginning of the conception of *σπουδαίολοιον* ;² the need of restraint in laughter in everyday conduct ; the distinction of the good-natured and ill-natured jests ; and, finally, the justification of the use of laughter against vice and folly.’³

We should bear in mind, however, that the views thus abstracted are scattered through the Platonic Dialogues, that they mostly arise almost by chance in the treatment of other subjects, and that perhaps in no Dialogue save the *Laws* can we completely identify the utter-

¹ Mary A. Grant, *The Ancient Rhetorical Theories of the Laughable in Cicero and Horace*, University of Wisconsin doctoral dissertation, 1917 (in manuscript), pp. 6-7.

² Compare Horace, *Satire* 1. 1. 24-5 : ‘ Quamquam ridentem dicere verum quid vetat ? ’ And see Plato, *Symposium* 197e, *Phaedrus* 234d, *Apology* 20d. These passages are noted by Miss Grant.

³ Miss Grant, p. 14.

ances of any speaker with the thoughts of the author himself. In the *Philebus* alone is there anything like a consideration of comedy in and for itself; and even here the treatment by Socrates occupies but a small fraction of the Dialogue, which as a whole is concerned with the meaning of the general term *pleasure*.

The type of writing which Plato chose for his medium of expression, the dialogue, is one that enables an author to approach the truth from various sides, and by gradual stages. In the preliminary stages the speakers may offer tentative expressions of the truth, or half-truths, or positive untruths. The argument advances by elimination of the false and a convergence upon whatever survives the test of dialectic. The result may or may not be expressly stated in sober prose. In general we may believe that the ultimate truth is seldom reached in the discussion proper, but is finally caught together and embodied in the myth, this last being the most imaginative part of a whole (namely, the Dialogue) which is itself an imaginative or poetical creation. The poetical quality of the Platonic Dialogues has been recognized by many writers, from Aristotle to Shelley.

Thus, in the *Poetics*,¹ Aristotle groups 'Socratic Conversations' with the mimes of Sophron and Xenarchus as a type of mimetic composition which thus far had received no common name. And again, according to Diogenes Laertius, 'Aristotle says that the type of his [Plato's] Dialogues is between a poem and ordinary prose.'² Cicero thinks the style of Plato more poetic than that of comedy.³ In modern times, Shelley regards Plato as first of all a poet.⁴ And Egger says of the Platonic

¹ See below, p. 168.

² Diogenes Laertius 3. 37; Aristotle, frg. 73, Rose (1886), p. 78.

³ Cicero, *Orator* (20) 67.

⁴ Shelley, *Defence of Poetry*, ed. by Cook, p. 9.

Dialogue: 'It is the drama of the school; as comedy is the drama of public life, and of private.'¹

Again, the works of Plato not only belong to the general family of the dialogue; most of them also fall under a definite species of this genus, which Aristotle calls 'Socratic Conversations,' a type of literature that was produced by other authors as well as by Plato, and even before him. On this head we have the testimony of Diogenes Laertius and Athenaeus, both of them citing Aristotle:

'They say that Zeno of Elea was the first to write dialogues; but Aristotle in the first part of *On Poets* says it was Alexamenus of Styra, or of Teos, as Favorinus records in his *Commentaries*.'²

So Diogenes Laertius; Athenaeus gives more:

'He [Plato] elaborately praises Meno, though he condemns the others one and all, in the *Republic* banishing Homer and imitative poetry, although he himself wrote dialogues which themselves were imitative. Yet he was not the inventor of the type, for before him Alexamenus of Teos invented this type of argument. . . . Aristotle in his work [? or 'dialogue'] *On Poets* writes as follows: "Accordingly, though the mimes, as they are called, of Sophron can not be included under the head of metrical compositions, may we not term them dialogues and imitations, and similarly the Dialogues of Alexamenus of Teos, which were the first Socratic Dialogues to be written?" In these words the most learned Aristotle plainly declares that Alexamenus wrote dialogues before Plato.'³

In this species of writing a kind of literary and traditional Socrates is the chief speaker; and the speeches are devised to fit this traditional character, a wise man

¹ Egger, p. 228.

² Diogenes Laertius 3. 48; Aristotle, frg. 72, Rose, pp. 77-8.

³ Athenaeus 11. 505c; Aristotle, frg. 72, Rose, p. 78. For Alexamenus, see Hirzcl, *Der Dialog* 1. 100-2.

in search of truth and beauty, but one who at the same time is 'ironical.' He is, in fact, the 'ironical man' of all time. As such, he is obviously related to one of the types of character proper to comedy, a fact that seems to be recognized by Aristotle.¹ On the other hand, his manner of speech, plain and natural, is allied to the style of the mime, a brief humorous or farcical dialogue using the customary medium of prose; while the mime, in turn, has its own affiliation with comedy. Thus there is a triple interrelation between the Platonic dialogue, the mimes of Sophron, and the mimes and comedies of Epicharmus. Plato loves Sophron and Epicharmus as well as Aristophanes.²

Accordingly, it is not by chance that Aristotle connects 'Socratic Conversations' with the mimes of Sophron and Xenarchus. His seemingly casual reference implies no distaste for the popular farce. Rather, we might judge from it that he was well-disposed to the farcical side of Epicharmus and Aristophanes. The Stagirite's own jokes no doubt met the Aristotelian and Ciceronian standard of what befits a gentleman,³ departing far enough from pointless obscenity and cruel invective — as the wit of Aristophanes was in this respect on a level above that of his predecessor Cratinus, or of the Old Comedy in general; yet the jokes of Aristotle are classed by Demetrius with those of Sophron:

'Elegance of expression includes grace and geniality. Some pleasantries — those of poets — are loftier and more dignified, while others [in prose writers] are more

¹ *Nicomachean Ethics* 4. 13; see below, p. 119.

² See above, pp. 29-38, below, pp. 111-2. For Epicharmus' development of the mime, see Reich, *Der Mimus*, p. 246; for Plato's love of Sophron, *ibid.*, pp. 381-3. For Epicharmus and Sophron in relation to the Platonic Dialogues, see Hirzel, *Der Dialog* 1. 20-26.

³ See above, pp. 26, 88, below, pp. 119-20.

commonplace and jocular, resembling banter, as is the case with those of Aristotle¹ and Sophron and Lysias. Such witticisms as "Whose teeth could sooner be counted than her fingers" (of an old woman) . . . differ in no way from gibes, nor are they far removed from buffoonery [γελωτοποιίας]."²

The Platonic Dialogues, then, are for Aristotle 'mimetic' — or, as we should say, dramatic — and poetical in so far as they are 'mimetic';³ and from their relation to the mimes,⁴ as well as for other reasons, they may be classed with the comic rather than the tragic part of literature. With their swift interchange of question and answer, they resemble both the plays of Epicharmus and the mimes of Sophron. Coming after the tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, and the comedies of Aristophanes, who in his turn had learned both from the tragic poets and from Epicharmus and the mimes, the Dialogues of Plato, as the next great literary type struck out by the Greek genius, are generically comic. The *Symposium* obviously may be so classed, and the *Ion*, if we can surely attribute this to Plato; the *Phaedrus* more readily than the *Protagoras*, and yet the *Protagoras*, too. Even in the most serious of the Dialogues, as the *Apology*, there are occasional touches betraying the kinship of Plato with the comic genius. The exceptional tragic quality of the *Phaedo*⁵ by contrast proves the rule.

¹ As Rhys Roberts, following Blass, points out, the reading of the text must stand, Maslow's proposed substitution of 'Aristophanes' for 'Aristotle' being untenable, since the reference is to prose writers.

² Demetrius *De Elocutione* 128, ed. and trans. by W. Rhys Roberts, p. 131; I have slightly modified the translation. Compare above, p. 26.

³ Compare below, p. 192.

⁴ Compare below, p. 168.

⁵ Cf. Hirzel, *Der Dialog* 1. 225.

In the *Politics* 2.1, Aristotle, when referring to statements made in the *Republic* of Plato, cites and quotes, not the author, but the 'Socrates' of that Dialogue. Observing a like precision, and citing the speaker, we may begin with the less favorable allusions to comedy in the Dialogues, and then pass to these that are more tolerant and less purely utilitarian.

In the *Apology* Plato makes Socrates say of the accusations issuing from an earlier stage in his career :

'I do not know, and can not tell, the names of my accusers — unless in the chance case of a comic poet.'¹

The hero then recounts the present charge against him :

' " Socrates is an evil-doer, and a meddling person who searches into things under the earth and in heaven, and makes the worse appear the better reason ; and he teaches the aforesaid things to others." '

And he adds :

' It is just what you [persons in the audience] have yourselves seen in the comedy [the *Clouds*] of Aristophanes — a man named Socrates there borne about [i. e., suspended in a basket], saying that he walks the air, and talking a deal of nonsense concerning matters of which I do not pretend to know either much or little.'²

However tense the situation, the reminiscence provokes a smile. Moreover, the Socrates of the *Apology* is here made to employ a rhetorical device familiar to later theorists, and doubtless already familiar to rhetoricians in the time of Plato. So Aristotle recognizes the legitimate use in an argument of both 'ancient'

¹ *Apology* 18; Jowett 2. 110. In the succeeding quotations from Plato I continue to make use of the translation by Jowett, occasionally revising.

² *Apology* 19; Jowett 2. 111.

and 'contemporary' (or 'recent') *witnesses*, and therefore with notes the advantage of quoting from the poets:

'Thus Eubulus [the orator] . . . employed against Chares the saying of Plato [the comic poet] against Archibius that "the avowal of rascality has gained ground at Athens."' ¹

Again, in the *Phaedo*, when he is about to discuss the immortality of the soul, Socrates is made to declare:

'I reckon that no one who heard me now, not even if he were a comic poet, would say that I talk idly [*ἄδολοσχῶ*], or discuss matters in which I have no concern.' ²

He had been represented as 'garrulous' by both Aristophanes³ and Eupolis⁴ — garrulity [*ἄδολοσχία*] being comic material in all ages; but here the reference to comic poets may be thought to include Ameipsias as well as Aristophanes, since the *Connus* of Ameipsias was exhibited at the same festival as the *Clouds*, and in it 'Socrates' appeared as one of the characters, while the title of the play was the name of his music-teacher.⁵ The history of 'Socrates' as a personage in imitative literature begins with these two comedies, twenty-five years before the death of the man himself; it had been running thirty years, and probably more, when Plato wrote the *Apology*.⁶ In this latter work the line is hard to draw between the admixture of the comic element and that larger part of the Dialogue which stirs our pity, hope, and admiration; yet we are doubtless justified in connecting the allusions to

¹ Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1. 15. The 'Plato' of this passage has also been taken to mean the philosopher; see below, p. 158.

² *Phaedo* 70; Jowett 2. 209-10.

³ Cf. Rogers, *Clouds*, pp. xxvii-xxx; and see *Clouds* 1480.

⁴ Eupolis, frg. 352, Kock 1. 351.

⁵ Starkie, *Clouds*, p. xxix.

⁶ Croiset 4. 279.

Aristophanes and Ameipsias in the *Apology* and the *Phaedo* with the remarks on comedy in the *Republic*.

In the *Republic* the discussion of poetry is incidental to the problem of education. And this does not mean the education of all classes in the State, but of one class in particular, namely, the Guardians, the military class. It means the education of these, mainly during childhood and youth. Further, this State is not regarded as actually possible; it is ideal, imaginary, at times fantastic — a magic mirror, so to speak, by gazing at which we arrive at a new sense of justice. The sections of the Dialogue that treat of poetry (the end of Book 2, beginning of Book 3, and beginning of Book 10) chiefly deal with Homer; tragedy and comedy are subordinate topics. Only one tragic poet, Aeschylus, is mentioned by name; no comic poet is so mentioned. The objection brought against poetry is threefold. It misrepresents the divine nature; for Homer displays the gods as subject to human fear, pain, and even lust, and to excessive laughter. It is imitative: the distinction is made between pure narrative, where the poet tells a straightforward story in his own words; pure 'imitation,' where a dramatist, saying nothing himself, presents the entire action through the utterances of his characters; and the mixed type, as in Homer, where some part of the story is given by the poet speaking for himself, and the rest by the characters. Finally, it represents emotions, such as fear, of which the warlike Guardians should see and know as little as possible. Poetry is therefore false to the nature of the divine, untrue also in so far as it is imitative and unreal, and dangerous to the safety of the State.

The triple distinction of *imitative*, *narrative*, and *mixed* is by some scholars found again in the *Poetics* of

Aristotle;¹ though some such distinction may have been a commonplace in Greek criticism before Plato, who certainly did not invent, any more than did Socrates, the notion that the drama is an 'imitative' art.² One may add that the *Republic* is itself of the mixed type. It begins with a narrative of the circumstances under which the Dialogue ostensibly took place; and indeed the entire narrative is related by one person as a story; yet it is on the whole 'imitative,' since, after a brief preliminary, the remainder is in the form of speeches put into the mouths of various characters by Plato. The Dialogue would therefore, as we have seen, be one of the books that should be denied admittance to the ideal State which it describes! It also contains a choice collection of the passages from Homer that would not be admitted. The *Symposium* would be excluded, both because it is imitative, and because of the naughty utterances in it by Aristophanes and Alcibiades. Nor would the other Platonic Dialogues fare better, in so far as the author is an imitative artist.

We may now look at the five references to comedy and laughter in the *Republic*, taken out of their context. The first needs no further preamble:

'Neither ought our guardians to be given to laughter; for a fit of laughter which has been indulged to excess almost always produces a violent reaction. . . . Then personages of worth, even if only mortal men, must not be represented as overcome by laughter, and still less must such a representation of the gods be allowed.'³

The second propounds the main question:

'You mean . . . to ask whether tragedy and comedy shall be admitted into our State?'⁴

¹ But see Alfred Gudeman in *Philologus* 76 (1920). 245.

² Cf. *Poetics* 3. 1448a28-9; see below, p. 172.

³ *Republic* 3. 388; Jowett 3. 71.

⁴ *Republic* 3. 394; Jowett 3. 79.

The final answer is that they are not to be admitted until a better defence is offered for them than is discovered by the speakers in the *Republic*. Such a defence was, in effect, undertaken by Aristotle in the *Poetics*. Some defence may or may not even then have been lying in Plato's mind; the positions reached by the 'Socrates' of the *Republic* are modified by 'the Athenian' of the *Laws*.

The third statement is diametrically opposed to an utterance made by the Socrates of the *Symposium*. The third is:

'For even when two species of imitation are nearly allied, the same persons can not succeed in both, as, for example, the writers of tragedy and comedy.'¹

At the end of the *Symposium*, as we shall see, Socrates maintains the opposite opinion.²

The fourth is:

'Then the man was perceived to be a fool who directs the shafts of his ridicule at any other sight but that of folly and vice.'³

In the fourth there is a loophole for comedy.

The fifth and last is:

'And so the feeling of sorrow which has gathered strength at the sight of the misfortunes of others [in tragedy] is with difficulty repressed in our own. . . . And does not the same hold also of the ridiculous? There are jests which you would be ashamed to make yourself, and yet when you hear them in comedy, or in prose,⁴ you are greatly amused by them, and are not at all disgusted by their unseemliness. The case of

¹ *Republic* 3. 395; Jowett 3. 79.

² See below, p. 114.

³ *Republic* 5. 452; Jowett 3. 144.

⁴ Reich, *Der Mimos*, p. 383, thinks this a reference to the prose mimes of Sophron. Jowett translates: 'and yet on the comic stage, or indeed in private,' etc.

pity is repeated: there is a principle in human nature which is disposed to raise a laugh, and this, which you once restrained by reason, because you were afraid of being thought a buffoon [*φοβούμενος δόξαν βωμολογίας*], is now let out again; and, having stimulated the risible faculty at the theatre, you are betrayed unconsciously to yourself into playing the comic poet at home. . . . And the same may be said of lust and anger and all the other affections, of desire and pain and pleasure, which are held to be inseparable from every action. In all of them poetry feeds and waters the passions instead of drying them up; she lets them rule, although they ought to be controlled, if mankind are ever to increase in happiness and virtue.¹

Most scholars have held that Aristotle took his departure from this argument, to combat it; that, having justified the emotional relief of pity and fear through tragedy, he went on to deal with the emotional problem of comedy in a similar way; and that for him comedy would afford the proper catharsis of laughter, so that the audience by giving vent to the risible faculty at the theatre, would be less likely to play the comic poet at home.²

In the *Laws* of Plato we have a less imaginative representation of the State, and one that, while sufficiently ideal, is yet more nearly adapted than the *Republic* to men as they are. The *Laws* being more 'practical,' in various ways 'the Athenian' of this Dialogue recedes from the conclusions of 'Socrates' in the *Republic*. His ideas may come nearer also to the final beliefs of Plato, though they do not wholly accord with the latter's practice. The passages which here concern us are two.

¹ *Republic* 10. 606; Jowett 3. 321-2.

² See above, pp. 5-7, 60-5.

The first :

‘ It is necessary also to consider and know uncomely persons and thoughts, and those which are intended to produce laughter in comedy, and have a comic character in respect of style, song, and dance, and of the imitations which these afford ; for serious things can not be understood without laughable things, nor opposites at all without opposites, if a man is really to have intelligence of either. But he can not carry out both in action, if he is to have any degree of virtue. And for this very reason he should learn them both, in order that he may not in ignorance do or say anything which is ridiculous and out of place. He should command slaves and hired strangers to imitate such things, but he should never take any serious interest in them himself, nor should any freeman or freewoman be discovered taking pains to learn them. And there should always be some element of novelty in the imitation. Let these, then, be laid down, both in law and in our discourse, as the regulations of laughable amusements which are generally called comedy.’¹

The second passage is :

‘ Do we admit into our State the comic writers who are so fond of making mankind ridiculous, if they attempt in a good-natured manner to turn the laugh against our citizens ? or do we . . . allow a man to make use of ridicule in jest and without anger about any thing or person ? . . . We forbid earnest. . . . But we have still to say who are to be sanctioned or not to be sanctioned by the law in the employment of innocent humor. A comic poet, or maker of iambic or satirical lyric verse, shall not be permitted to ridicule any of the citizens, either by word or likeness, either in anger or without anger. And if any one is disobedient, the judges shall either at once expel him from the country, or he shall pay a fine of three minae, which shall be dedicated to the god who presides over the contests. Those only who have received permission shall be

¹ *Laws* 7. 816-7 ; Jowett 5. 199.

allowed to write verses at one another, but they shall be without anger and in jest ; in anger and in serious earnest they shall not be allowed. The decision of this matter shall be left to the superintendent of the general education of the young, and whatever he may license the writer shall be allowed to produce, and whatever he rejects let not the poet himself exhibit, or ever teach anybody else, slave or freeman, under the penalty of being dishonored, and held disobedient to the laws.'¹

These more tolerant utterances in the *Laws* remind one of the rule laid down by Aristotle in the *Politics*, that a youth shall not attend the contests in comedy before he has reached the proper stage in his education ;² but neither in the *Laws* nor in the *Republic* have we a detached inquiry into the essence of the comic drama. In both Dialogues, as in the *Politics*, the treatment of comedy is incidental to that of a leading topic ; the function of the drama being judged by the standard of utility in the State, and with special reference to juvenile education.

Let us turn to allusions of another sort. The *Symposium* as a whole is a comedy ; and the comic myth which Plato as an imitative artist puts into the mouth of the Aristophanes of this Dialogue deserves the same measure of attention from us as the reference to Aristophanes by Aristotle in the *Poetics*. But apart from the Aristophanic myth the direct allusions by Plato to comic poets are limited, and his quotations or adaptations of their language, so far as these can be identified, are few. Nevertheless they have a value.

In the *Theaetetus* Socrates shows high regard for Epicharmus, ranking him in comedy with Homer in epic poetry, at the summit in their respective provinces

¹ *Laws* II. 935-6 ; Jowett 5. 325.

² See below, p. 125.

of art, and citing both for the idea that 'all things are the offspring of flux and motion.'¹ And in the *Gorgias* he asks: 'Must I then say with Epicharmus, "Two men spoke before, but now one shall be enough"?'² Hirzel makes much of the lively style of conversation in the plays of Epicharmus, where one speaker catches up his fellow in the middle of a verse; the poet has raised the wit of the Sicilian mime to a higher level, introduces speculation, and hence in more than one way has had an influence on the Dialogues of Plato.³ Epicharmus would also recommend himself to both Plato and Aristotle through the strictly philosophical poetry that has been attributed to him. Aristotle evinces his respect by citing Epicharmus twice in the *Poetics*, apparently giving him, together with Phormis, the credit for the invention of plots in comedy, and making him the forerunner of the Athenian Crates in that notable matter.⁴ A phrase from Epicharmus seems to reappear at intervals in *De Generatione Animalium* and the *Metaphysics*; and he is otherwise remembered seven or eight times in the extant works of Aristotle.⁵

In the *First Alcibiades*, if this be genuinely Platonic, Socrates jocularly quotes an unnamed author: 'When you and I were born, Alcibiades, as the comic poet says, "the neighbors hardly knew of the important event."' ⁶ On the authority of Olympiodorus the proverb has been attributed to the comic poet Plato,

¹ *Theaetetus* 152; Jowett 4. 206.

² *Gorgias* 505; Jowett 2. 397.

³ Hirzel, *Der Dialog* 1. 22-3.

⁴ See below, pp. 172, 177-8.

⁵ See below, pp. 152-5.

⁶ *First Alcibiades* 121; Jowett 2. 488.

in some unidentified drama,¹ a writer who does not otherwise emerge, if here, in the works of the philosopher, and who is possibly once mentioned by Aristotle.² A chance-allusion to the comic poets is likewise to be noted in the *Phaedrus*, where the youthful orator humorously accuses Socrates of resorting to a familiar expedient of the stage: 'Do not let us exchange "*tu quoque*" as in a farce.'³

Among the works of Plato the *Symposium*, the chief topic of which is love, comes nearest to being both a discussion and an illustration of the comic spirit; but it is not a discussion of comedy in the narrower sense; and even the discourse of Aristophanes (containing much that the Socrates of the *Republic* would exclude from his commonwealth as unsuited to the education of the Guardians) is too long to quote. Indeed, it needs only to be mentioned. We can notice two allusions to comedy from other parts of the Dialogue. There are those who think that Socrates' references to the *Clouds* in the *Apology* and the *Phaedo* demonstrate the antagonism of Plato to that drama. What, then, shall we say regarding Plato's use of a line from the *Clouds* (362) in the *Symposium*? Here he makes Alcibiades adopt the very words of Aristophanes for a realistic description of Socrates — 'in our streets, stalking and jetting like a brent-geese, and casting his eyes about askance.'⁴ And what shall we say of the contradiction between the argument in the *Republic*, that the same persons can not succeed in writing both

¹ Plato, the comic poet, *arg.* 204, Kock I. 657-8.

² See above, p. 105, below, p. 158.

³ *Phaedrus* 236; Jowett I. 441.

⁴ *Symposium* 221; compare Starkie, *Clouds*, p. 95.

tragedy and comedy,¹ and the opinion noted at the close of the *Symposium*? —

‘The chief thing he [Aristodemus] remembered was Socrates compelling the other two to acknowledge that the genius of comedy was the same with that of tragedy, and that the true artist in tragedy was an artist in comedy also.’²

The truth is that Plato himself was a master in both the serious and the comic vein, and that his characters say what is proper at a given stage in any Dialogue.

At length we come to the pregnant remarks on comedy in the *Philebus* — pregnant, but still subordinate to the topic of the Dialogue, namely, pleasure. Socrates is again the speaker, but here the method is less dramatic, and the usual irony almost wholly dropped. We may omit the brief intercalary answers of Protarchus, since the Socratic questions are virtually progressive enunciations of fact:

‘And you remember how pleasures mingle with pains in lamentation and bereavement? . . . And you remember also how at the sight of tragedies the spectators smile through their tears? . . . And are you aware that even at a comedy the soul experiences a mixed feeling of pain and pleasure? . . .

‘I have just mentioned envy; would you not call that a pain of the soul? . . . And yet the envious man finds something in the misfortunes of his neighbors at which he is pleased? . . . And ignorance, and what is termed clownishness, are surely an evil? . . .

‘From these considerations learn to know the nature of the ridiculous. . . . The ridiculous is, in short, the specific name which is used to describe the vicious form of a certain habit; and of vice in general it is that kind which is most at variance with the inscription at Delphi, . . . “Know thyself.” . . . And the opposite would

¹ See above, p. 108.

² *Symposium* 223; Jowett i. 594.

be, "Know not thyself." . . . Are there not three ways in which ignorance of self may be shown? . . . In the first place, about money; the ignorant may fancy himself richer than he is. . . . And still more often he will fancy he is taller or fairer than he is, or that he has some other advantage of person which he really has not. . . . And yet surely by far the greatest number err about the goods of the mind; they imagine themselves to be much better men than they are. . . .

'All who are silly enough to entertain this lying conceit of themselves may, of course, be divided, like the rest of mankind, into two classes — one having power and might, and the other the reverse. . . . Those of them who are weak and unable to revenge themselves, when they are laughed at, may be truly called ridiculous. . . . Ignorance in the powerful is hateful and horrible, because hurtful to others both in reality and in fiction; but powerless ignorance may be reckoned, and in truth is, ridiculous. . . .

'Let us examine the nature of envy. . . . Is not envy an unrighteous pleasure, and also an unrighteous pain? . . . There is nothing envious or wrong in rejoicing at the misfortunes of enemies? . . . But to feel joy instead of sorrow at the sight of our friends' misfortunes — is not that wrong? . . .

'And the three kinds of vain conceit in our friends, . . . the vain conceit of beauty, of wisdom, and of wealth, are ridiculous if they are weak, and detestable when they are powerful. May we not say as . . . before that our friends who are in this state of mind, when harmless to others, are simply ridiculous? . . . And do we not acknowledge this ignorance of theirs to be a misfortune? . . . Then the argument shows that when we laugh at the folly of our friends, pleasure, in mingling with envy, mingles with pain; for envy has been acknowledged by us to be mental pain, and laughter is pleasant; and so we envy and laugh at the same instant. . . . And the argument implies that there are combinations of pleasure and pain in lamentations, and in tragedy and comedy, not only on the stage, but on the greater stage of human life; and so in endless other cases. . . .

' I mentioned anger, desire, sorrow, fear, love, emulation, envy, and similar emotions, as examples in which we should find a mixture of the two elements so often named. . . . We may observe that our conclusions hitherto have had reference only to sorrow and envy and anger. . . . Then many other cases remain ? . . . And why do you suppose me to have pointed out to you the admixture which takes place in comedy ? Why but to convince you that there was no difficulty in showing the mixed nature of fear and love and similar affections ? ' ¹

These extracts from the Dialogues of his master provide a general background for the entire thought of Aristotle on comedy. But it would be hazardous to attempt the establishment of many relations between the two authors in detail. Having already indicated a few points of similarity and difference between them, I shall confine myself to a few additional remarks.

The main similarity between Aristotle and the chief interlocutors in the Platonic Dialogues lies in the field of ethics, political science, and rhetoric. One of the Aristotelian assumptions is that an orator must be a good man,² and, as we should say, a gentleman. Aristotle likewise, no doubt, would subscribe to the notion, generally held among the ancients,³ that in order to be a good poet a man must be good himself; and this, in spite of what he says regarding the origin of poetry, to the effect that the forerunners of the comic poets were not on the same moral plane as the forerunners of the tragic.⁴ But he does not hold that a poem must

¹ *Philebus* 48-50; Jowett 4. 621-4. I find no better place than at the end of these extracts from Plato to insert the maxim attributed to Socrates by Stobaeus (*Anthologium* 3. 34. 18): 'One should use laughter as one uses salt, sparingly'; see Stobaeus, ed. by Wachsmuth and Hense, 3. 686.

² Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1. 2.

³ Cf. Aristophanes, *Frogs* 1008-12, 1482-1502; Strabo 1. 2. 5.

⁴ See below, pp. 174-5.

satisfy the standards of Ethics and Politics, since, however ennobled the agents in a tragedy may be, the hero must be depicted with a flaw sufficient to bring about his downfall, and since the agents in comedy have the faults of the average man, or are worse than the average.¹ The comic poet may not, indeed, endow his characters with any and every defect; he is limited to the kinds and degrees of disproportion and ugliness that are not painful or injurious and corrupting. Consequently he must be familiar with the variety and extent of human aberrations from normal conduct. Yet it is not of the public stage, but of individual ethics and social life, that Aristotle says:

‘In the matter of truth, . . . he who observes the mean may be called truthful, and the mean state truthfulness. Pretence, if it takes the form of exaggeration, is boastfulness [ἀλαζονεία], and one who is given to it is a boaster [i. e., ‘impostor’ (ἀλαζών)], but if it takes the form of depreciation it is irony [εἰρωνεία], and he who is given to it is ironical [εἰρων].

‘As regards pleasantness in amusement, he who observes the mean is witty [εὐτράπελος], and his disposition wittiness [εὐτραπεία]; the excess is buffoonery [βωμολοχία], and he who is given to it is a buffoon [βωμολόχος], whereas he who is deficient in wit may be called a boor [ἀγροῦκος], and his moral state boorishness [ἀγροικία].

‘As to the other kind of pleasantness, namely pleasantness in life, he who is pleasant in a proper way is friendly [φίλος], and his mean state is friendliness [φιλία]; but he who goes too far, if he has no ulterior object in view, is obsequious [ἄρεσκος], while if his object is self-interest, he is a flatterer [κόλαξ], and he who does not go far enough, and always makes himself unpleasant, is a quarrelsome and morose sort of person [δύσερής τις καὶ δύσκολος].’²

¹ See below, pp. 170-1, 176-7.

² *Nicomachean Ethics* 2. 7; trans. by Welldon, pp. 51-2, revised.

The preceding passage, and the following (likewise from the *Ethics*), have perhaps a special interest because of their relation to the *Tractatus Coislinianus*, where we have a parallel to three of the characters here described :¹

‘ It seems that the boaster [ὁ ἀλαζών] is one who is fond of pretending to possess the qualities which the world esteems, although he does not possess them, or does not possess them to the extent that he pretends. The ironical person [ὁ ἐίρων], on the contrary, disclaims or disparages what he possesses; while the intermediate person, who is a sort of “plain-dealer,” is truthful both in life and in speech—he admits the fact of his possessions, he neither exaggerates nor disparages them. . . . A person who pretends to greater things than he possesses, if he has no ulterior object in doing so, seems to be a person of low character, as otherwise he would not take pleasure in a falsehood; but he looks more like a fool than a knave. Supposing he has an object, if the object be glory or honor, the pretentious person, like the boaster, is not highly censurable; but if it be money, or the means of getting money, his conduct is more discreditable. It is not a particular faculty, but a habit of choice, which constitutes the boaster; for it is by virtue of his moral state and his character that he is a boaster, as a person is a liar, if he takes pleasure in falsehood for its own sake, or as a means of winning reputation or gain. Thus it is that boastful people, if their object is reputation, pretend to such qualities as win praise or congratulation, but if their object is gain, they pretend to such qualities as may be beneficial to their neighbors, and can not be proved not to exist—for example, to skill in prophesying or medicine. . . .

Ironical people, on the other hand, in depreciating themselves, show a more refined character, for it seems that their object is not to make gain but to avoid pomposity. They are particularly fond of disclaiming the

¹ See below, pp. 226, 262-5.

same qualities as the boaster affects, that is, the qualities which the world esteems — as was the way, for example, of Socrates. People whose pretensions have to do with such things as are trivial and obvious are called humbugs [*βαυκοπανοῦργοι*], and are contemptible. Sometimes irony itself appears to be boastfulness, as in the dress of the Lacedaemonians; for exaggerated deficiency is a form of boastfulness, as well as excess. . . .

‘As relaxation, no less than business, enters into life, and one element of relaxation is playful diversion, it seems that here, too, there is a manner of intercourse which is in good taste. . . . In this matter as in others it is possible to go beyond, or to fall short of, the mean. Now they who exceed the proper limit in respect to the laughable seem to be buffoons [*βωμολόχοι*] and clownish [*ψορτικοί*], as their heart is set upon raising a laugh at any cost, and they aim at exciting laughter more than at decorous language and not giving pain to the one who is ridiculed. On the other hand, they who will never themselves say anything laughable, and are indignant with those who do, may be classed as boorish [*ἄγριοι*] and rude [*σκληροί*].

People whose fun is in good taste are called witty [*εὐτράπελοι*, ‘lively’], a name which implies their happy turns of speech, as these happy turns may be described as movements of the character; for characters, like bodies, are judged by their movements. But as it is never necessary to look far for the laughable, and as most persons enjoy fun and ridicule more than is necessary, buffoons are also termed ‘witty,’ because they are amusing. But it is clear, from what has been said, that there is a difference, and indeed a wide difference, between the two.

‘The characteristic of the mean [or ‘intermediate’] state is tact. A person of tact is one who will use and listen to such language as is suitable to an honorable gentleman; for there is such language as an honorable gentleman may use and listen to in the way of fun, and the fun of a gentleman is different from that of a

slavish person, and, again, the fun of a cultivated from that of an uncultivated person. The difference may be illustrated from the old comedies as compared with the recent; in the former it was scurrilous ['abusive' or 'obscene'] language [αἰσχρολογία] that provided laughter, but in the latter it is more the innuendo [ὑπόνοια]. As regards decorum, the difference between scurrility [or 'obscenity'] and innuendo is considerable.

'Is it, then, to be the definition of a good jester that he uses such language as befits a gentleman, or that he does not give pain, or actually gives pleasure, to his listener? Or is it impossible to determine this point? The same things are hateful or agreeable to different people. But the language to which a person listens will correspond to his nature; for it seems that he will make such jests as he can bear to listen to. There will be some kinds of jest, then, that he will not make; for mockery is a species of reviling which legislators prohibit; they ought perhaps to have prohibited certain kinds of jesting as well.

'Accordingly, this will be the moral state of the refined gentleman; he will be, so to say, a law unto himself. Such, then, is the mean, or intermediate, character, whether it be called "tactful" or "witty." But the buffoon is the slave of the ludicrous; he will spare neither himself nor others, if he can raise a laugh; and he will say such things as no person of refinement would utter, and some that the latter will not even listen to.

'The boor is one who is useless for such social purposes; he contributes nothing, and takes offense at everything. Yet it seems that relaxation and fun are indispensable elements in life.'¹

But the boor is useful to the comic poet, whether in the *Savages* (Ἄγριοι) of Pherecrates² and in the shape

¹ *Nicomachean Ethics* 4. 13-14; trans. by Welldon, pp. 127-31, revised.

² Cf. Croiset 3. 482-3.

of the Triballian deity in the *Birds* of Aristophanes, or as the Theophrastian Boor of the later comedy. The entire passage is of great interest, and for several reasons. By its reference to 'legislators' it takes us back to the extracts already given from the *Republic* and the *Laws* of Plato.¹ Moreover it clearly is full of parallels to the views of Aristotle regarding comedy, and contains a little gallery of characters suitable to the comic stage — not only the boor (ὁ ἄγριος), the impostor (ὁ ἀλαζών), the buffoon (ὁ βωμολόχος), and the ironical man (ὁ εἰρων), but the clown (ὁ φορτικός), the humbug (ὁ βαυκοπανοῦργος), the witty man (ὁ εὐτράπελος), and possibly others. Of these, only the 'witty' man is ideal, and the 'ironical man' tolerable, from the point of view of Ethics; but, as we have had occasion to notice, for Aristotle what is ethically ideal is one thing, and what is suited to comedy is another. The distinction is sharply brought out in the following passage from the *Eudemian Ethics*:

'As to those who from insensibility are unmoved by these same pleasures, some call them insensible, while others describe them as such by other names; but this state is not very familiar or common, because all rather err in the opposite direction, and it is congenital to all to be overcome by and to be sensible to such pleasures. It is the state chiefly of such as the boors introduced on the stage by comic writers, who keep aloof from even moderate and necessary pleasures.'²

The buffoon and the boor are alike unethical; and the buffoon, with a language suited to him, has the same right on the comic stage as the boor with his insensibility to a joke. Yet the passage in the

¹ See above, pp. 107-11.

² *Eudemian Ethics* 3.2, trans. by J. Solomon (1915) in the Oxford translation of Aristotle, ed. by W. D. Ross.

Nicomachean Ethics on the difference between the 'old' comedies and the 'recent' has been seized upon by scholars (perhaps not too 'lively,' or *quick in turning* their minds) who are bound to make Aristotle prefer the Middle Comedy to the Old, or Anaxandrides to Aristophanes, or the like — a matter I have disposed of before.¹ Must we reiterate his injunction against taking the standard of propriety in imitative art to be the same as that in morals? At present we need only observe that he here makes use of a distinction between an earlier and a later type of comedy, in order to illustrate a point in everyday conduct. He is writing of ethics, not of comedy. It serves his purpose to exemplify in this way, as it serves his purpose to describe the buffoon, the impostor, and the ironical man, all three of them alike common to earlier and later stages of comedy as he knew it. All three are found in Aristophanes,² in Theophrastus (with variations), and in the *Tractatus Coislinianus*.³ By implication Aristotle includes the ironical Socrates of literary tradition as a fit personage for comedy. And he also implies that there are occasions — the Dionysiac festival, with its comedy, doubtless being one of them⁴ — when an educated and liberal man may listen to the sort of thing he would not utter in private life or in a public speech. The Socrates of the *Republic* grants as much;⁵ though he seems to think the peril greater to the adult audience than does Aristotle. No doubt the latter as well as Plato would allow a

¹ See above, pp. 18-41.

² See Cornford, Index, s. v. 'Buffoon,' 'Impostor,' 'Irony.'

³ See below, p. 226.

⁴ See below, p. 125.

⁵ See above, p. 110.

refined gentleman to read the speech of Alcibiades in the *Symposium*. There is nothing worse in Aristophanes.

In other words, we should attend to the aim and purpose of a work when we wish to interpret chance-details and momentary illustrations. The caution applies as well to the following extracts from the *Rhetoric* and *Politics* of Aristotle. They run parallel to utterances in the Dialogues of Plato where considerations of ethics, moral eloquence, and statesmanship are uppermost.

Of the various means of arousing laughter, says Aristotle, some may be employed by the orator, and some may not. If either of two references from the *Rhetoric* to the *Poetics* is genuine, all were discussed in the *Poetics*. Of those that are denied to the orator, should not some be granted to a poet when he is writing a speech for a boaster or a buffoon?

'Jokes seem to be of some service in debate; Gorgias said that we ought to worst our opponent's earnest with laughter, and his laughter with earnest—a good saying. The various kinds of laughter have been analyzed in the *Poetics*. Some of these befit a free man, and others do not; one must take care, then, to choose the kind of joke that suits one. Irony is more liberal [or 'refined'] than buffoonery; the ironical man jests for his own amusement, the buffoon for the amusement of another.'¹

I take the passage to be genuine, the authenticity of *Rhetoric* 3 as a whole now being fairly established; its character as a sort of addendum to the first two Books should not weigh too heavily against the other

¹ *Rhetoric* 3. 18, trans. by Jebb, p. 197, revised. For the other reference in the *Rhetoric* to a treatment of the forms of the ludicrous in the *Poetics*, see below, p. 138.

arguments in its favor. And if Book 3 is genuine, then it is more nearly related to the *Poetics* than is any other work of Aristotle. Assuming the genuineness of the whole, we see that neither in Book 3 nor elsewhere is there evidence of an objection on Aristotle's part to the Old Comedy. But in Book 2, in an extended analysis of shame and its causes, we find a brief reference to comic poets, with a possible allusion to the injury which the Socrates of the *Apology* says resulted to him from the *Clouds* of Aristophanes:

'We feel shame, too, before those who give their whole minds to their neighbors' mistakes -- as scoffers and comic poets; for these are, in a way, evil-speakers and spreaders of reports.'¹

But we should not be too certain about the allusion; the tense would fit the Middle Comedy better than the Old. And, indeed, the remark appears among the instructions enabling the orator to arouse a sense of shame in his audience or his adversary; though the orator would be in a different situation from the comic poet as regards both the means and the end of his endeavor.

So would he be, also, as regards the nobility of his cadences or rhythms; he could not freely use the metrical devices of comedy. The forensic orator duly employs rhythm, but not strict metre, in his periods and clausal cadences. For him, the heroic rhythm, analogous to the metre of epic poetry, is too dignified and stately; while the iambic rhythm is that of everyday speech, and not sufficiently dignified or impressive. Accordingly, the paeon is, for him, the correct rhythm.

'The trochee, again, is too much akin to the comic

¹ *Rhetoric* 2. 6, trans. by Jebb, p. 86. Compare above, p. 104.

dance — as appears in the tetrameter, which has a tripping rhythm.¹

The point for us is that in Aristotle's view the trochaic metre, unsuitable for oratory, *is* proper in the comic dance, including the cordax, which at its worst was wild, coarse, and bacchanalian,² and doubtless was to be excluded from the State described in the *Laws* of Plato.³ We need not fancy Aristotle countenancing the worst excesses of the Old Comedy. But that he was not afraid of their effect upon the morals of an educated man, and would not exclude broad comedy from *his* State, may be deduced from another reference to 'the legislator':

'But the legislator should not allow youth to be hearers of satirical iambic verses, or spectators of comedy, until they are of an age to sit at the public tables and to drink strong wine; by that time education will have armed them against the evil influences of such representations.'⁴

Aristotle would banish 'pictures or tales which are indecent,' and insists that 'the light utterance of shameful words is akin to shameful actions'; yet even for obscenity he makes an exception in favor of the festivals of the gods at which the law permits ribaldry.⁵ While substantially agreeing with the legislators in the Platonic Dialogues as regards the influence of Dionysiac comedy upon youth, the proprieties for an educated

¹ *Rhetoric* 3. 8, trans. by Jebb, p. 162.

² Haigh, p. 318.

³ *Laws* 7, 816 a, d; see above, p. 110.

⁴ *Politics* 7. 17, trans. by Jowett, p. 298. According to Egger (p. 157), 'Aristophane disait que l'école était pour les enfants, le théâtre pour les hommes' — a statement that seems to rest on what Aristophanes makes Aeschylus say in *Frogs* 1054-5: 'For to little children whoever tells them something is their teacher; but to adults, the poets.'

⁵ *Politics* 7. 17.

man in ordinary life, the decorum of an orator, and the usual activities of a citizen as a member of the State, he still leaves room in his scheme of things for the display of Aristophanic art ; as did Plato, who himself functions as a comic poet in writing the Aristophanic myth, and the speech of the drunken Alcibiades, in the *Symposium*.

I have given the parallel passages from the two authors in such fashion that the reader, if he choose, may disregard my tentative inferences, and draw his own conclusions respecting the debt of Aristotle to Plato on the subject of comedy. The reader will not forget, however, the existence of other systematic treatises on poetry and comedy, some of which Aristotle must have known. Besides Plato, other disciples of Socrates wrote on topics connected with literary criticism. According to Diogenes Laertius, Crito, Simmias of Thebes, and Simon produced works discussing poetry and fine art.¹ Of the members of the Platonic school, according to the same authority, the fertile Speusippus dealt with rhetoric and art, while Xenocrates wrote on oratorical or literary problems, and the learned Heraclides of Pontus on music, and on poetry and the poets.² Among the predecessors of Aristotle, there was a Democritus who composed a treatise *On Poetry*, and another *On Rhythms and Harmony*. The *Poetics* of Aristotle refers twelve, or perhaps thirteen, times to technical authorities, mentioning Protagoras, Hippias of Thasos, Euclides, Glaucon, and Aripheades.³

¹ Diogenes Laertius 2. 12 (Crito), 2. 13 (Simon), 2. 15 (Simmias) ; cf. Egger, p. 131.

² Diogenes Laertius 4. 1 (Speusippus), 4. 2 (Xenocrates), 5. 6 (Heraclides) ; cf. Egger, pp. 165-6.

³ Gudeman, pp. xxii-xxiii.

And further, Diogenes Laertius speaks of another Aristotle, a native of Cyrene, who wrote *On the Art of Poetry*; another, who wrote on the *Iliad*; and yet another, who left a treatise *On Pleonasm*. There were, he says, eight Aristotles, beginning with 'the man himself.'¹

The chief pupil of the Stagirite was Theophrastus, author of treatises *On Style*, *On the Art of Poetry*, *On the Laughable*, and *On Comedy*; as they were fellow-students under Plato, and but a dozen years apart in age, Theophrastus may have influenced Aristotle. The influence of master upon pupil is seen in the relations between the *Rhetoric* of Aristotle and the *Characters* of Theophrastus.

But, so far as concerns Plato, we must suppose that Aristotle in dealing with comedy would start out either from the practice of the Platonic Dialogues, or from the doctrines enunciated in the *Republic* and the *Laws*, or from the discussion in the *Philebus*, or from two, or from all, of these three sources. If his thought were mainly stimulated by the *Philebus*, he might dwell upon comedy as a corrective of envy and anger, or such like emotions, and upon the removal of the painful sense of disproportion connected with them.² If he partly accepted the positions reached in the *Republic* and the *Laws*, but, going further in his qualification than the Athenian of the *Laws* qualifies the doctrines set forth by the Socrates of the *Republic*, he might arrive at a defence of comedy analogous to his defence of Homer and tragic poetry — of the imitative arts in general — in the *Poetics*.

Unfortunately the *Poetics* as we have it leaves us in doubt at the critical juncture; for the promise of a

¹ Diogenes Laertius 5. 1. 35; cf. Egger, p. 185.

² See above, p. 66.

fuller treatment of catharsis — the promise given in the *Politics* — is not redeemed in our *Poetics* to the satisfaction of most scholars.¹ The dissatisfied are rather forced to consult the *Politics* for such light, admittedly imperfect, as it may shed upon the term catharsis in the *Poetics*. In the *Politics*, Book 8, the last, is entirely occupied with the education of children and youth. The subject of musical education is treated at some length, though Aristotle refers the reader to technical authorities for more complete information. He concludes that children 'should be taught music in such a way as to become not only critics but performers';² but he objects to the 'flute' (αὐλός) — that is, for educational purposes. In deference to custom, both here and elsewhere I accept the usual translation of αὐλός by 'flute'; but it must be understood that Aristotle refers to an instrument more like a clarinet or oboe, with a note, not soft like that of a flute, but very rich (not necessarily loud) or, as he says, 'exciting.' He does not object to it in the *Poetics*, where flute-playing is taken as an example of imitative art, to illustrate the general nature of poetry;³ and we can see from the reference to the comic poet Ecphantides, in the same chapter of the *Politics*, that Aristotle associates the flute with comedy.⁴ But in education he rejects it, partly because the instrument is not of the sort that has a good moral effect:

'It is too exciting. The proper time for using it is when the performance aims, not at instruction [μάθησιν], but at the relief of the passions [κάθαρσιν].'⁵

¹ But see above, pp. 63-4.

² *Politics* 8. 6, trans. by Jowett, p. 311.

³ *Poetics* 1. 1447^a14-16.

⁴ *Politics* 8. 6; see below, p. 152.

⁵ *Politics* 8. 6; trans. by Jowett, p. 312.

There is a similar distinction, between his educational tenets and his demands upon fine art, in regard to painting. As we note in the *Poetics*, painters fall into classes by the same criterion that divides writers of tragedy from writers of comedy, since Polygnotus depicts men as 'better than we are,' and Pauson as 'worse.'¹ The tendency of Pauson is accepted, as the comic mask is later accepted;² they have their justification in art. But in the *Politics* Aristotle says: 'Young men should be taught to look, not at the works of Pauson, but at those of Polygnotus'; and he makes a similar provision regarding sculpture.³

He has, then, a special objection to the flute; but he votes against 'any other instrument which requires great skill'—they 'ought not to be admitted into education.' He rejects not only 'the professional instruments,' but also 'the professional mode of education in music.' 'The execution of such music is not the part of a freeman, but of a paid performer';⁴ and the result is that the performers are vulgarized, for the end at which they aim is bad.'⁵ The passage mirrors the decline of art since the democratic age of Pericles.

Our author next proceeds to rhythms and harmonies, referring us, for technical details, to 'the more exact student of the subject,' and himself professing to deal with it 'only after the manner of the legislator.' He explicitly defers a treatment of it after the manner of the student of poetry, according to the general principles of the *Poetics*:

¹ *Poetics* 2; see below, p. 169.

² *Ibid.* 5; see below, p. 176.

³ *Politics* 8. 5, trans. by Jowett, p. 310.

⁴ Cf. Plato, *Laws* 7. 816; see above, p. 110.

⁵ *Politics* 8. 6; trans. by Jowett, pp. 312-4.

' We maintain further that music should be studied, not for the sake of one, but of many benefits ; that is to say, with a view to (1) education, (2) purgation (the word "purgation" we use at present without explanation, but when hereafter we speak of poetry, we will treat the subject with more precision) ; music may also serve (3) for intellectual enjoyment, for relaxation, and for recreation after exertion. It is clear, therefore, that all the modes must be employed by us, but not all of them in the same manner. In education the most ethical modes are to be preferred, but in listening to the performances of others we may admit the modes of action and passion also ; for feelings such as pity and fear, or, again, enthusiasm, exist very strongly in some souls, and have more or less influence over all. Some persons fall into a religious frenzy, whom we see as a result of the sacred melodies — when they have used the melodies that excite the soul to mystic frenzy — restored as though they had found healing and purgation. Those who are influenced by pity or fear, and every emotional nature, must have a like experience, and others in so far as each is susceptible to such emotions, and all are in a manner purged, and their souls lightened and delighted. The purgative melodies likewise give an innocent pleasure to mankind. Such are the modes and the melodies in which those who perform music at the theatre should be invited to compete. But since the spectators are of two kinds — the one free and educated, and the other a vulgar crowd composed of mechanics, laborers, and the like — there ought to be contests and exhibitions instituted for the relaxation of the second class also. And the music will correspond to their minds ; for as their minds are perverted from the natural state, so there are perverted modes and highly strung and unnaturally colored melodies. A man receives pleasure from what is natural to him, and therefore professional musicians may be allowed to practise this lower sort of music before an audience of a lower type. But, for the purposes of education, as I have already said, those modes and melodies should be employed which are ethical, such

as the Dorian, as we said before; though we may include any others which are approved by philosophers who have had a musical education. The Socrates of the *Republic* is wrong in retaining only the Phrygian mode along with the Dorian, and the more so because he rejects the flute; for the Phrygian is to the modes what the flute is to musical instruments — both of them are exciting and emotional. Poetry proves this, for Bacchic frenzy and all similar emotions are most suitably expressed by the flute, and are better set to the Phrygian than to any other mode. The dithyramb, for example, is acknowledged to be Phrygian, a fact of which the connoisseurs of music offer many proofs, saying, among other things, that Philoxenus, having attempted to compose his *Mysians* as a dithyramb in the Dorian mode, found it impossible, and fell back by the very nature of things into the more appropriate Phrygian.¹

As a legislator, then, Aristotle takes issue with the Platonic Socrates² on a matter related to comic poetry. The flute, and the Phrygian mode also, are too emotional and exciting for the education of young citizens; but they are both suited to catharsis. That there is a comic, as well as a tragic, catharsis may probably be inferred, yet only from the allusion to the dithyramb and from the instance of Philoxenus. This author, mentioned in *Poetics* 2, in his dithyrambic tale of the Cyclops leaned to the side of comedy by representing Polyphemus as worse than the average, while Timotheus, also writing dithyrambs, represented him as better.³ The reading of '*Mysians*' in the *Politics* is conjectural; the reference may be simply to the 'tales' of Philoxenus. The whole passage contains no direct

¹ *Politics* 8. 7; Jowett's translation revised by Ross, in the Oxford translation of Aristotle.

² *Republic* 3. 399.

³ See Bywater, pp. 6, 7, 117.

reference to comedy. The exhibitions suited to the vulgar crowd could hardly mean the plays of Aristophanes (an author who has given delight to the finest minds of all times), since Aristotle permits the higher orders of society to witness comedy as soon as they have reached a proper age.¹ And besides, the legislator has in mind some kind or kinds of exhibition current in his own day. The lower types of mime might fit the case, if our author were not thinking of performances partly musical. Yet, on the evidence of the *Poetics*, in general he shows no animus against the mime.

XI

ARISTOTLE ON PLEASURE

As we have seen, Aristotle nowhere clearly reveals his conception of the specific pleasure arising from comedy. He comes disappointingly near to so doing in the last passage we have quoted. But, all told, the most definite statement we have on this topic from his unquestioned works is that the pleasure afforded by the *Odyssey*, an epic with a double issue, happy for some of the characters, though unhappy for others, resembles that of comedy;² we remember, too, his saying that Alcidas called the *Odyssey* 'a fair mirror of human life'³ — a remark anticipating part of Cicero's definition of comedy as recorded by Donatus.⁴ To this we may perhaps add that the effect produced by the Homeric *Margites* — in the shape in which this

¹ See above, p. 125.

² See above, p. 61; below, p. 201.

³ *Rhetoric* 3. 3; see above, p. 91.

⁴ See above, p. 91.

poem was known to Aristotle — must have been still closer to his conception.¹ But the epic poem, and similarly the mock-epic, lacks the embellishments of music and spectacle, and is more diffuse than comedy.²

What is his view of pleasure in general? The answer must have a bearing upon the more particular question, if we make allowance, when necessary, for the sources of our quotations, as these come from the *Poetics* itself, or the *Ethics*, or the *Rhetoric*. In chapter 6 of the *Poetics*, if we accept with Bywater Vahlen's conjectural reading, ἡ δὲ εὐδαιμονία, we learn that happiness is a form of activity.³ It consists in action; it is not a state of being. This is said with reference to the personages of the drama, but since the drama is an imitation of life,⁴ the statement applies also to the individuals in the audience. The effect of comedy, then, is a form of activity.

Both pain and pleasure are forms of activity. The contention in the *Poetics* is corroborated in *De Anima*:

'Sensation . . . is analogous to simple assertion or simple apprehension by thought, and, when the sensible thing is pleasant or painful, the pursuit or avoidance of it by the soul is a sort of affirmation or negation. In fact, to feel pleasure or pain is precisely to function with the sensitive mean, acting upon good or evil as such. It is in this that actual avoidance and actual appetite consist. Nor is the appetitive faculty distinct from the faculty of avoidance, nor either from the sensitive faculty; though logically they are different. But to the thinking soul images serve as present sensations; and when it affirms or denies good or evil,

¹ Cf. below, p. 175.

² Cf. below, p. 223.

³ Bywater, pp. 18, 19.

⁴ See below, p. 184.

it avoids or pursues ; this is why the soul never thinks without an image.¹

But with respect to life as a whole we learn in the *Nicomachean Ethics* :

‘ Happiness [εὐδαιμονία] . . . does not consist in amusement [ἐν παιδιᾷ]. It would be paradoxical to hold that the end of human life is amusement, and that we should toil and suffer all our life for the sake of amusing ourselves ; for we may be said to desire all things as means to something else, except indeed happiness, as happiness is the end or perfect state.

‘ It appears to be foolish and utterly childish to take serious trouble and pains for the sake of amusement. But to amuse oneself with a view to being serious seems to be right, as Anacharsis says ; for amusement is a kind of relaxation, and it is because we can not work for ever that we need relaxation.

‘ Relaxation, then, is not an end. We enjoy it as a means to activity ; but it seems that the happy life is a life of virtue, and such a life is serious — it is not one of mere amusement.’²

In the *Rhetoric*, Book I, chapters 5 and 6, happiness (εὐδαιμονία) is described in terms of the things that produce it, and of its constituent parts, and the question of the good and the useful is discussed, since all these matters must be kept in view in a hortatory or a dissuasive speech. For us, however, much more to the point is the popular definition and analysis, in chapter II, of pleasure (ἡδονή). The whole chapter should be consulted, both for comparison with the analysis of mixed pains and pleasures in the *Philebus* of Plato,³ and for the Aristotelian doctrine itself. In what follows we must limit ourselves to extracts more or less directly related to the *Poetics*. But we may

¹ *De Anima* 3. 7, ed. and trans. by R. D. Hicks, p. 141.

² *Nicomachean Ethics* 10. 6, trans. by Welldon, pp. 333-4.

³ See above, pp. 114-6.

preface these by two passages from the *Rhetoric* which account for human activity in general. The first is:

‘The emotions (*πάθη*) are those things, being attended by pleasure or pain, by which men are altered in regard to their judgments — as anger, pity, fear, and the like, with their opposites.’¹

The second:

‘So that every act of men must have one of seven causes — chance, nature, force, habit, reason, passion, lust.’

‘To put it shortly,’ says Aristotle, ‘all things which men do of themselves are good or apparently good, pleasant or apparently pleasant’; for he counts among pleasures ‘riddance from pain or apparent pain, and the exchange of a greater pain for a less.’² And so he leads up to the chapter in question:

‘Let us assume, then, that pleasure is a kind of motion [*κίνησις*] of the soul, and a settling, sudden and sensible, into our proper nature; and pain the contrary. If pleasure is this kind of thing, plainly the pleasant is that which tends to produce the condition described; while that which tends to destroy it, or to produce the opposite, is painful. It must be pleasant, then, as a rule, to conform with nature, particularly when the things done according to the general law have their special natures satisfied. Habits, too, must be pleasant; for an acquired habit comes to be as a natural instinct — habit having a certain likeness to nature; for “often” and “always” are neighbors, and nature is concerned with the invariable, as habit with the frequent. That is pleasant, too, which is not done perforce; for force is against nature; wherefore the compulsory is painful, and it has rightly been said:

Every compulsory thing is grievous.³

¹ *Rhetoric* 2. 1, trans. by Jebb, p. 69, revised.

² *Ibid.* 1. 10, pp. 44-6.

³ A saying attributed to Evenus of Paros.

Acts of attention, earnest or intense efforts, must be painful, for they involve compulsion and force, unless one is accustomed to them ; and then the habit becomes a sort of pleasure. Again, the opposites of these are pleasant ; so opportunities of ease ; moments of respite from toil or attention, sports, seasons of repose and sleep, are among pleasant things ; for none of these is compulsory. Everything, too, is pleasant of which the desire exists in one ; for desire is appetite of the pleasant. . . . All pleasures consist either in perceiving things present, or in remembering things past, or in hoping things future. . . .

‘ Generally, all things which, when present, give joy, also supply, as a rule, pleasures of memory or hope. Hence it is pleasant to be angry — as Homer said of passion that it is

Sweeter far than dripping honey ;¹

for no one is angry with a person who seems beyond the reach of vengeance, or who is greatly above himself in power ; or, if angry at all, he is less angry. And so most of the desires are attended by a certain pleasure. . . .

‘ A certain pleasure follows on mourning and lamentation ; for, as the pain consists in the loss, so there is a pleasure in remembering the lost, and, in a manner, seeing him as he lived and moved. . . . Also revenge is pleasant, since what is painful to miss is pleasant to get ; and angry men are pained above measure by the loss, as they are rejoiced by the hope, of revenge. To conquer is pleasant, not only to lovers of victory ; . . . for it gives rise to an impression of superiority. . . . And since to conquer is pleasant, it follows that sportive fights and contests are so, as offering many opportunities of victory. . . .

‘ To learn and to admire [wonder] are pleasant, as a rule ; for admiring [wonder] implies desiring to learn, . . . and learning involves a settling into one’s proper natural condition. . . .

¹ *Iliad* 18. 109.

' And since the pleasant is that which benefits, it is pleasant to men to set their neighbors right, and to complete imperfect things. Again, since learning and admiring are pleasant, it follows that pleasure is given by acts of imitation, such as painting, sculpture, poetry, and by every skilful copy, even though the original be unpleasant; for one's joy is not in the thing itself — rather, there is a syllogism: "This is like that." And so it comes that one learns something. Sudden reversals and narrow escapes are pleasant, being all in the nature of marvels.

' Then, since that which is according to nature is pleasant, and kindred things are natural to each other, all things akin to one and like one are pleasant to one, as a rule — as man to man, horse to horse, youth to youth; whence the proverbs; "Mate delights mate"; "Like to like"; "A beast knows his fellow"; "Jackdaw to jackdaw"; and so forth. And since everything like and kindred to oneself is pleasant, and a man is like nothing so much as himself, it follows that everybody is more or less selfish, self being the very standard of all such resemblances. And, since every one is selfish, it follows that all find pleasure in their own things — for instance, in their deeds and words; whence people are fond, as a rule, of their flatterers, of their lovers, of honor, of their children (for their children are their own work).

' So, to complete imperfect things is pleasant; for at this point the work becomes one's own. And since to rule is most pleasant, to seem wise is also pleasant; for intelligence befits a ruler; and wisdom is the knowledge of many admirable things. Further, since people are, for the most part, ambitious, it follows that it is pleasant to censure one's neighbors, as well as to rule. It is pleasant also to spend one's time in the occupation in which one seems to be at one's best; as the poet says:

Toward this he spurs, to it giving most of each day —
To the work that shows him at his best.¹

¹ Euripides, frg. 183, Nauck, second. ed.

‘ In like manner, since amusement and relaxation of every kind are among pleasant things, and laughter, too, it follows that the causes of laughter must be pleasant — namely, persons, utterances, and deeds. But the forms of the ludicrous have had separate treatment in the *Poetics*.’¹

A commentary might be written on the bearing of this extract upon the *Poetics*; but various relations are easily found. On the surface lies the notion that our pleasure in literary and all other art is the activity of discovering resemblances, with the human nature of the observing individual as the standard of comparison. Even if the poet — a comic poet, let us say — chose for his object of imitation one that was not only ugly, but painful, still the observer could delight in the successful representation; he would ‘learn something.’ The reversals and escapes alluded to seem to be on the order of those in comedy rather than tragedy. And the proverbs quoted are such as we might find in a mime; Demetrius says that ‘almost all the proverbs in existence’ might be collected out of Sophron.² But the close of the chapter is of even greater interest. ‘Persons’ (ἄνθρωποι), ‘utterances’ (λόγοι), and ‘deeds’ (ἔργα) have by some been taken to correspond to the ‘characters’ (ἥθη), ‘diction’ (λέξις), and ‘things done’ (πράγματα) of the *Tractatus Coislinianus*;³ while the correspondence is not exact,⁴ it is not negligible.

And the Tractate, in turn, sends us back to two other passages in Aristotle which we have already noticed; for the ‘characters’ of the ‘buffoon’ (τῶ βωμολόχῳ),

¹ *Rhetoric* I. II, trans. by Jebb, pp. 46-51, revised. Cf. above, pp. 62, 123.

² Demetrius *De Elocutione* 156.

³ See below, pp. 225-6.

⁴ Cf. Arndt, p. 13.

the 'ironical man' (τὰ εἰρωνικά), and the 'impostors' (τὰ τῶν ἀλαξόρων) in the Tractate correspond to three of the characters described in the *Nicomachean Ethics* 2.7 and 4.14.¹

The simplest explanation of these correspondences, and of the references from other works of Aristotle to the *Poetics*, is doubtless the best. However much tampering with his text there may have been by Athenian and Alexandrian (or later) students, editors, and copyists, it is not to be supposed that the author himself made no such 'cross-references.' In chapter 6 of the *Poetics* he says that he reserves comedy and epic poetry for consideration thereafter; the promise is fulfilled for epic poetry in subsequent chapters, as it is not for comedy. In his extant works Aristotle does not discuss the satyr-drama; the type is barely mentioned in *Poetics* 4.1449^a20; perhaps several specimens are cited in the course of the work — for example, the *Phorcydes* of Aeschylus; we should expect to find more attention given to this type in a treatment of comedy. In chapter 19 Aristotle omits the analysis of 'thought' (διάνοια), and all that appertains to the construction of speeches in poetry, contenting himself with cursory remarks on the subject, as:

'The thought of the personages is shown in everything to be effected by their language — in every effort to prove or disprove, to arouse emotion (pity, fear, anger, and the like), and to magnify or minify things.'² For a detailed treatment he refers us to the *Rhetoric*, and there we are, in fact, fully instructed on such matters. In the *Rhetoric* there are six references to the *Poetics*, two of them to the treatment of the

¹ See above, pp. 117-21.

² Cf. Bywater, p. 55.

laughable. The other four are satisfied, three of them completely, one almost so, in our *Poetics*. The two references to this work for a discussion of the ludicrous by species are not thus satisfied. It is worth notice that both are measurably satisfied when we consult the Tractate in the belief that it contains some of the lost substance from Aristotle's writings on poetry.

Herewith I close my general introductory remarks, the next three sections being in the nature of an addendum, though containing materials which it is desirable to place before my adaptation of the *Poetics*.

XII

SCATTERED PASSAGES IN ARISTOTLE WITH A BEARING ON COMEDY

In this and the following sections are collected various passages (most of them not utilized in the foregoing pages, and all taken from works other than the *Poetics*) that directly or indirectly touch upon comedy, comic poets, the comic chorus, and the subject of laughter. It has not always been possible to reduce them to order; but it seems best to give all of them for the sake of completeness.

(1) 'The proem is the beginning of a speech, and corresponds to a prologue in poetry and a prelude in flute-playing. All these are beginnings, and prepare the way, as it were, for what follows. . . . As for the proems of forensic speeches, it must be understood that they are equivalent to the prologues in dramas and to the introductions of epic poetry. . . . In tales and epic poems we have an indication of the subject, so that the hearers may know what the story is about, and the mind not be kept in suspense. . . . Accordingly,

he who puts the opening, as it were, into the hand of the listener gives the latter a thread with which to follow the story. Wherefore :

Sing, Goddess, the wrath ;¹

Tell me, Muse, of the man ;²

Lead me forth on another tale, how from Asia's soil
There came a great war into Europe.³

In the same way the tragic poets explain the action, if not at the very opening, like Euripides, at all events somewhere in the prologue. Thus Sophocles :

My sire was Polybus.⁴

And the same is true of comedy.⁵

Leaving the *Rhetoric* for a moment, we may go to Aristotle's *De Interpretatione* :

(2) ' By a statement [λόγος] is meant a significant synthetic utterance, of which the several parts have each a meaning, but do not severally affirm or deny. Thus the word " man " has a meaning, but does not express affirmation or denial ; in order to have a statement some word must be added to " man." . . . Not every statement is a proposition, but only such as imply affirmation or denial. This does not occur in all cases ; for example, a wish is a statement, but neither false nor true. Such forms we may set aside ; an examination of them belongs rather to rhetoric and the art of poetry. Our present concern is with the categorical statement.'⁶

¹ Iliad I. I.

² Odyssey I. I.

³ From an epic poem by Choerilus.

⁴ Actually, *Oedipus the King* 774 ! Here Aristotle uses the term 'prologue' very loosely.

⁵ *Rhetoric* 3. 14. To illustrate the use of introductory explanations in Aristophanes, Cope (*Rhetoric of Aristotle*, ed. by Cope-Sandys, 3. 169) refers to the speech of Strepsiades in the *Clouds* (at the opening), to that of Demosthenes in the *Knights* (40ff.), and to that of Dionysus in the *Frogs* (64ff.). Cope follows Victorius, correcting him.

⁶ *De Interpretatione* 4.

(3) 'Men are false in their statements, and their counsels, from all or one of the following causes. Either, through folly, they have not right opinions; or, having right opinions, they say through knavery what they do not think; or they are sensible and honest, but not well-disposed — whence they may happen not to advise the best course, although they see it. Besides these cases there is no other.'¹

(4) 'It remains for us to discuss the general appliances. All men are compelled in speaking to apply the topic of possible and impossible; and to try to show, either that a thing will be, or that it has been. Further, the topic of size is common to all speeches; all men use depreciation and amplification in debate, in praising or blaming, in accusing or defending.'²

(5) 'Another topic is taken from things said [by the adversary], applied to our own case as compared with his. The ways of doing this are various — as in the *Teucer* [of Sophocles]. Iphicrates used this against Aristophon — asking whether Aristophon would betray the ships for money, and, when he said "No," rejoining: "So you, being Aristophon, would not betray them; would I, being Iphicrates?" It is necessary that the adversary should be more liable to the suspicion of crime; else, the effect will be ludicrous — as if one were to say this in answer to the accusations of Aristides. The argument is meant to create distrust of the accusers; for, as a rule, the accuser is by way of being better than the defendant. This assumption, then, should always be confuted. Generally speaking, a man is absurd when he upbraids others with what he himself does, or would do; or when he exhorts others to do what he himself does not, or is incapable of doing.'³

The topic of possible and impossible, the practice of magnifying what is small and minifying what is great, and the ludicrous employment of things said by the

¹ *Rhetoric* 2. 1, trans. by Jebb, p. 69.

² *Ibid.* 2. 18, p. 107.

³ *Ibid.* 2. 23, pp. 122-3.

adversary, can all be illustrated from the *Frogs* of Aristophanes. In general, the principles of forensic eloquence are travestied in the comic agon or 'debate,' which is a typical element in the Old Comedy. The use of depreciatory resemblances, common to all forms of the ludicrous, is noticed in the following passage from Aristotle's *Topica*:

(6) 'Another topic: what is nearer to the good is better and preferable. And what is more like the good; as justice is more like the good than the just. And what is more like the better than the thing itself; as some say Ajax is better than Odysseus because he is more like Achilles. The objection to this is that it is not true; for there is nothing to hinder Ajax being more like Achilles, not in the point in which Achilles is best, while the other is good but not like. We must consider whether the likeness subsists in those things which are more ludicrous; just as the ape is more like the man, while the horse is not like him; for the ape is not more beautiful, but more like the man.'¹

The demands of proportion in style, from the *Rhetoric*:

(7) 'Style will have propriety, if it express emotion and character and be proportionate to the subject. This proportion means that important subjects shall not be treated in a random way, nor trivial subjects in a grand way, and that ornament shall not be attached to a commonplace notion. Otherwise the effect is comic, as in the poetry of Cleophon; for some of his phrases were as if one should say, "Venerable fig."'²

(8) 'If any one should say he had washed himself in vain because the sun was not eclipsed, he would be laughed at, since, there is no causal connection between this and that.'³

¹ *Topica* 3. 2.

² *Rhetoric* 3. 7, trans. by Jebb, p. 159, revised. For Cleophon, the epic poet, see Bywater, pp. 115, 293.

³ *Physica Auscultatio* 2. 6.

(9) 'Equivocal terms are the class of words most useful to the sophist, for it is with the help of these that he juggles; synonyms are most useful to the poet. By synonyms in ordinary use I mean, for instance, "to go" and "to walk"; these are at once accepted and synonymous terms.'¹

(10) 'Faults of taste [or 'frigidities'] occur in four points of style. First, in the use of compound words, such as Lycophron's "many-visaged heaven [above] the vast-crested earth," and his "narrow-passaged strand," or Gorgias' expressions, "a beggar-poet flatterer" [χόλαξι], or "forsworn and for-ever-sworn." . . . A second cause . . . is the use of rare words, as when Lycophron called Xerxes "a vasty man." . . . A third fault lies in the misuse of epithets, that is, in making them either long or unseasonable or very numerous. . . . The consequence is that this poetical diction by its impropriety becomes ludicrous and frigid, and obscure through its wordiness [ἀδόλεσχία]. . . . The fourth and last source of frigidity is metaphor; for metaphors, too, may be inappropriate, either from their absurdity (comic poets have their metaphors), or from an excess of tragic grandeur.'²

(11) 'Our metaphors, like our epithets, should be suitable. This will result from a certain proportion; if this is lost, the effect will be unbecoming, since the contrast between opposites is strongest when they are put side by side. As a crimson cloak suits a young man, what, we must inquire, suits an old man? The same dress will not suit him. If we wish to adorn, we must take our metaphor from something better in the same class of things; if to depreciate, from something worse. Thus, opposites being in the same class, it would be an example of this to say that the beggar "prays," or that the man who prays "begs"; as both are forms of asking.'³

¹ *Rhetoric* 3. 2, trans. by Jebb, p. 149.

² *Ibid.* 3. 3, adapted from Jebb's translation, pp. 152-4, and Weldon's, pp. 236-8.

³ *Rhetoric* 3. 2, trans. by Jebb, p. 149.

(12) 'And so the comic poets make a good metaphor in jest when they call gray hairs "mould of old age" and "hoar-frost."' ¹

(13) 'As there can be both a real and a sham syllogism, it follows that there can be both a real and a sham enthymeme — the enthymeme being a sort of syllogism.

'Among the topics of apparent enthymemes is the topic from diction. One department of this topic, as in dialectic, consists in making a final statement, as if it were a logical conclusion, when no reasoning process has been performed: "So it is not thus or thus"; "So it must be thus or thus." And, in rhetoric, a compact and antithetical expression has itself the air of an enthymeme; such a style is the province of the enthymeme. The *figure* of the diction [τὸ σχῆμα τῆς λέξεως]² seems to be the source of this fallacy. It is a help towards a syllogistic style of diction to state the sum of many syllogisms: "He saved some — he avenged others — he freed Greece." Each of these points has been proved from other things; and when they are put together, we have the effect of a fresh result.

'Another department of the topic consists in equivocation — as to say that the mouse is a noble animal, since the most august of all rites, that of the *Mysteries*, is derived from it. Or suppose that the encomiast of a dog were to avail himself of the constellation so called, or of Pindar's saying about Pan:

Blest one, whom the Olympians call the Great Mother's
faithful hound, taking all forms by turn.

Or one might argue: "As it is a great disgrace that there should be no dog in a house, so it is plain that the dog is honorable." Or: "Hermes is the most liberal of the gods; for he is the only one about whom there is such a proverb as 'Shares in the luck of Hermes!'" ³

¹ *De Generatione Animalium* 5. 4, trans. by Platt in the Oxford translation of Aristotle, ed. by Smith-Ross. The poets can not be identified; see Meineke 4. 604.

² Cf. *Rhetoric* 3. 10. 1410^b28-9: κατὰ δὲ τὴν λέξιν τῶ μὲν σχήματι.

³ *Rhetoric* 2. 24, trans. by Jebb, pp. 132-3, revised.

Possibly we ought to consider a great many other passages on fallacious reasoning; but we must not quote too much of the *Rhetoric*, nor all of *De Sophisticis Elenchis*! For an examination of fallacies Aristotle, in a discussion of comedy, would doubtless refer us to the appropriate special treatises.

(14) 'Clever turns for the most part depend upon metaphor with the addition of a deceptive element. That the hearer has learned something is more obvious from its contrast with what he expected; the mind seems to say, "How true! And I did not see it." . . . Good riddles are enjoyed for the same reason, for there is an act of learning, and a metaphor is uttered. Similarly in the case of what Theodorus [the rhetorician] terms "novelties of expression," since these arise when there is an element of surprise, and, as he says, the thing turns out contrary to what we were expecting, like the jokes found in comic writers, produced by deceptive alterations in words, and by unexpected words in verse, where the listener anticipates one thing, and hears another. Thus:

Statelily stept he along, and under his feet were his — chilblains.¹

The anticipated word was "sandals." In this kind of joke, however, the point must be caught instantly. Jokes arising from changes within the word depend upon a twist of pronunciation which gives us something different from the meaning we should naturally attach. An example given by Theodorus is the joke on Nicon the harper: ῥάττει σε; for the speaker makes as if he would say ῥάττει σε [? ῥάττεις = 'You thrash the harp'] — and deceives the hearer, for he says something else [? i. e., ῥάττ' εἶ = 'You are a Thracian scullion']. When the point is caught, the joke is amusing; if the hearer did not know the man to be a Thracian, he would, of course, see no point in the

¹ Author unknown; possibly an example taken from Theodorus, and quoted by him from an earlier rather than a later comic poet.

joke.¹ Another example [? from Theodorus] is : βούλει αὐτὸν πέρσαι.² Both kinds of pleasantry [changes of pronunciation in individual words, and substitutions of one word for another] must be used as is fitting [in oratory]. . . . In all such cases, however, the excellence of the pun, or of the metaphor, depends upon its being apposite. For example : " Bearable [a man's name] is not bearable." Here we have a pun formed by the use of a negative. But it is fitting only if the man is disagreeable. Again :

Do not be more strange, Strange [Ξένος], than you must.³

In other words, do not be more of the very thing [word, name, thing] you are than you can help. And again : " Our stranger must not always be a stranger " ; for here the word ξένος means *alien*, too. Of the same sort is the line that has been admired in Anaxandrides :

Well is it to die ere one has done a thing worthy of death ;⁴

for this is equivalent to saying, " It is a worthy thing to die without being worthy to die," or " It is worthy to die when one is not worthy to die," or " doing nothing worthy of death."

In all these cases the species of diction is the same ; but the more concise and antithetical the saying, the more popular it is, for the reason that our new perception is made sharper by the contrast, and quicker by the brevity. Further, there should always be some special application, or some particular merit of expression, if we are to have truth as well as point ; for these

¹ On the joke in this doubtful passage, see my article, *A Pun in the Rhetoric of Aristotle*, in *The American Journal of Philology* 41. 48-56 ; but compare also Rutherford, p. 444, f. n.

² Jebb, translation of the *Rhetoric*, p. 174, illustrates the point by rendering : ' You want him to find his Mede ' (= ' meed '). But the joke has never been satisfactorily explained. The change within single words seems to be one affecting the last letter or so of the word ; in like manner the substitution of one whole word for another in the verse cited by Aristotle affects the end of the metrical line.

³ Listed as from an unidentified comedy in Kock 3. 448, frg. 209.

⁴ Anaxandrides, frg. 64, Kock 2. 161.

qualities are not always combined. Thus "A man should die void of offence" is true but trite, and so is "A worthy man should wed a worthy wife."¹ But a clever saying appears if you have truth and point conjoined: "He dies a worthy death who is unworthy of dying." And the more excellences you combine, the more vivacious the expression; for example, when the words are metaphorical, and the metaphor is of such a kind, and there is antithesis with parallel structure, and vividness as well.

'Effective similes . . . are in a sense metaphors, for, like the proportional metaphor, they always consist of two terms. . . . There are similes of the simple kind, such as the comparison of a flute-player to an ape, or of a short-sighted man to a sputtering lamp (for both wink). But in a first-rate simile there is a proportional metaphor. . . . It is here that poets are most loudly condemned for failure, and applauded for success — as when they get the two members of the simile to correspond:

Like stalks of curled parsley he carries his legs;
Just like Philammon struggling with the sand-bag.² . . .

'It may be added that popular hyperboles are metaphors, as, for example, the one about the man with the black eye: "You might have taken him for a basket of mulberries"³ — the bruise being as purple as a mulberry, while the quantity makes the exaggeration. And another kind of phrase like the two we have given is a hyperbole with a difference of expression. Thus, "Just like Philammon struggling with the sand-bag" may be converted into, "You would have thought him

¹ Listed among the fragments of Anaxandrides, frg. 79, Kock 2. 164. It can not be taken as an evidence of the alleged fondness of Aristotle for this poet (see above, p. 30), since he calls the maxim trite. It looks like a common proverb, the property of no one in particular.

² Iambic lines; the author, or authors, can not be identified; see Kock 3. 448, frg. 207, 208. Aristotle seems to like 'iambic' lines from comedy as illustrations of points in rhetoric.

³ Of unknown authorship; perhaps from the Old Comedy. See Kock 3. 545, frg. 779.

to be Philammon struggling with the sand-bag"; and "Like stalks of curled parsley he carries his legs" into, "You would have thought he had, not legs, but stalks of parsley, so curly were they."'¹

I add six passages noted by Kock as containing probable or possible reminiscences by Aristotle from comedies.

(15) 'Another topic of inference is by induction; for example, in the *Peparethia*: "The women always distinguish the truth about [the parentage of] the children."'²

(16) 'They . . . are liable to injury against whom others have any available pretext [from alleged past injuries to ancestors or friends]; for, as the proverb has it, "Villainy only wants a pretext."'³

(17) 'Whence the poet is impelled jestingly to say: "He has the end [= the fate, the termination] on account of which he came to exist."'⁴

(18) 'For in their case [that of dreamers who have visions that come true] the saying holds: "If you make many throws, your luck must change."'⁵

(19) From Demetrius: 'Who, now, in conversing with a friend, would express himself like Aristotle in writing to Antipater on the subject of the aged exile? —

¹ *Rhetoric* 3. 11. With the close of the extract compare Demetrius *De Elocutione* 161:

'The pleasantries of comedy arise especially from hyperbole, every hyperbole being of an impossible character, as when Aristophanes [*Acharnians* 86] says of the voracity of the Persians that

For loaves they roasted oxen whole in pipkins.'

See Demetrius *On Style*, ed. and trans. by W. Rhys Roberts, p. 147.

² *Rhetoric* 2. 23. Kock 3. 463, frg. 302, takes '*Peparethia*' to be the name of a comedy (like *Andria*, *Perinthia*, etc.), and suggests Antiphanes as a possible author.

³ *Rhetoric* 1. 12. Kock 3. 493, frg. 446; Kock is in doubt whether to assign the proverb to the Old Comedy or to the New (= 'Middle').

⁴ *Physica Auscultatio* 2. 2. Kock 3. 493, frg. 447; here again Kock is similarly in doubt.

⁵ *De Divinatione per Somnum* 2. Kock 3. 493, frg. 448; Kock in doubt as before.

"If he be doomed to wander to the ends of the earth, a fugitive hopeless of returning, it is clear that 'One can not blame such men if they wish to descend to Hades' hall.' " '1

(20) From Aristotle again: 'But the north-east wind is not a clearing one, since it whirls around; whence the saw: "Drawing [evils] upon himself as the north-east wind draws a cloud." '2

We may close the section with the interesting gloss, not found in our *Poetics*, of the Anti-Atticist: κυντότατον. Ἀριστοτέλης περὶ ποιητικῆς τὸ δὲ πάντων κυντότατον. It is supposed to be a reference to some comedy; I translate:

(21) 'Most dog-like [= 'shameless']. Aristotle *On the Art of Poetry*: "the most shameless of all." '3

XIII

REFERENCES TO SPECIFIC COMIC POETS IN WORKS OTHER THAN THE *POETICS*

In the *Poetics* Aristotle refers to the following comic poets: Aristophanes, Crates, Chionides, Epicharmus, Magnes, and Phormis.⁴ He alludes to a comedy (or perhaps to more than one) based on the tale of Orestes and Aegisthus;⁵ Meineke wished to identify this play with the *Orestes* of Alexis, but the chances are against any identification.⁶ And in the same work Aristotle mentions as comic writers Hegemon, Homer, Nicocharēs,

¹ Demetrius *De Elocutione* 225. Kock 3. 493, frg. 449; Kock in doubt as before.

² Aristotle, *Meteorologica* 2. Kock 3. 612, frg. 1229; Kock in doubt as before.

³ Anti-Atticista in Bekker, *Anecdota Graeca* 1. 101. 32; Aristotle frg. 77, Rose, p. 81.

⁴ See below, pp. 172, 177-8.

⁵ See below, p. 201.

⁶ See Kock 2. 358, frg. 166.

Philoxenus, Sophron, and Xenarchus.¹ Were we to single out any one as the favorite comic poet or comic writer of Aristotle on a basis of the distribution and relative frequency of his allusions to that author outside of the *Poetics*, the *Didascalíac*, and the *Tractatus Coislinianus* (if the last is in some sense Aristotelian), we doubtless should hit upon Epicharmus (and not, for example, Anaxandrides). The references, however, seem to betray as much interest in the metaphysical poetry attributed to Epicharmus as in his comedies; and yet we recall the laudatory reference to his comedies in the *Theaetetus* of Plato, where Socrates, giving Epicharmus the highest station among comic poets, cites him on a point in metaphysics;² for various reasons we need not distinguish too sharply between the comedies and the *Carmen Physicum*.³ As we have seen, however, the frequency of allusion to an author by Aristotle may tell us little about the latter's critical estimates;⁴ the nature of the allusion, and of the work in which it is found, is more significant. From the *Poetics*, the *Didascalíac*, and the applications of the Tractate, we should infer a paramount interest in Aristophanes. All told, in the *Poetics* as well as elsewhere, and doubtful as well as certain, there are references to seventeen comic poets whom we can name: (?) Alexis, Ameipsias, Anaxandrides, (?) Antiphanes, Archippus, Aristophanes, Chionides, Crates, Cratinus, Ecphantides, Epicharmus, (?) Eubulus, Eupolis, Leucon, Philippus, Plato, Strattis. But we have only chance fragments of the *Didascalíac*, which must have been a

¹ See below, pp. 168, 170, 174-5.

² See above, pp. 111-2.

³ See Kaibel, pp. 133-8.

⁴ See above, pp. 29-30.

mine of information regarding everything connected with the Athenian dramatic contests, and hence regarding the comedies and their poets, but especially, it would seem, the Old Comedy and Aristophanes. Besides, there may be, and probably are, many unidentified allusions to comic poets in the extant works of Aristotle, as, for example, in the *Rhetoric*. The references that follow are therefore at best symptomatic of his interest.

Ecphantides

(1) 'The popularity [of the flute at Athens] is shown by the tablet which Thrasippus dedicated when he furnished the chorus to Ecphantides.'¹

Epicharmus

(1) 'There are likewise false antitheses such as Epicharmus produced :

Now on a time within their halls I was ;
But on a time beneath their roof was I.'²

(2) 'In maxims that do not state something unexpected, no reason is subjoined. Of these, some need no added reason, because they are familiar beforehand ; for example :

To my mind, 'tis best for a man to be healthy.'³

No reason is needed — this is the usual opinion.'⁴

(3) 'They [the most popular maxims, having the nature, but not the form, of enthymemes] are the ones

¹ *Politics* 8. 6. For Ecphantides, an early poet of the Old Comedy, preceding Cratinus, cf. Meineke 1. 35-8.

² *Rhetoric* 3. 9. Cf. Cope-Sandys 3. 106 ; Epicharmus, frg. 147 (49, Lorenz) in Kaibel, p. 118. It is thought that the poet ridiculed and parodied the antitheses and other rhetorical tricks of Gorgias and his school of oratory.

³ The scholiast on Plato, *Gorgias* 451e, ascribes the line either to Simonides or to Epicharmus. Meineke and Kaibel doubtfully attribute it to Epicharmus : Kaibel, p. 140, frg. *262.

⁴ *Rhetoric* 2. 21.

in which the reason for the statement is implied, as in

Nurse not immortal anger, being mortal.

To say that it is wrong to nurse one's anger for ever is a maxim; the added words, "being mortal," give the reason. Similarly:

A mortal should think mortal thoughts, not thoughts immortal.¹

(4) 'Accumulation, too, and climax — as used by Epicharmus — [serve to magnify a subject]; partly for the same reason as the distributive process, since the accumulation of details makes any pre-eminence striking; and partly for the reason that what you are magnifying appears to be the origin and cause of many things.'²

(5) 'Now we speak of one thing coming from another in many senses. . . . Thus we say that night comes from day, . . . meaning that A follows B. Or, secondly, that a statue is made from bronze, . . . meaning that the whole arises from something that exists and is shaped. Or, thirdly, that a man becomes unmusical from being musical, . . . and generally in the sense of opposites arising from opposites. And, lastly, as in the climax, the poetical device of Epicharmus, "from slander arises railing, and from this, fighting"; and all these from something which is the beginning of the motion [the efficient cause]. In such cases the efficient cause may be in the things themselves, as in the instance just mentioned (for the slander is a part of the whole trouble), or it may be external to them, as the art is external to the works of art or the torch to the burning house.'³

(6) 'A "beginning" is that part of a thing from which one would first proceed; . . . or that from which

¹ *Rhetoric* 2. 21. Aristotle's first quotation is regarded as a line from some tragedy (see Jebb's translation, p. 114, f. n.); the second was ascribed by Bentley to Epicharmus (Kaibel, p. 140, frg. *263).

² *Rhetoric* 1. 7; see Epicharmus, frg. 148, Kaibel, p. 118.

³ *De Generatione Animalium* 1. 18. Aristotle quotes, perhaps loosely, from Epicharmus. Cf. Epicharmus, frg. 148, Kaibel, p. 118.

a particular thing would best originate ; . . . or that part from which, when the part exists, a thing first arises ; . . . or that, not a part of the thing, from which a thing first arises, and from which the movement, the change, naturally first proceeds, . . . as from railing comes fighting.¹

(7) ' To come from something means, first, to arise from something as from matter. . . . Secondly, as from the first moving principle ; for example, from what does fighting come ? It comes from railing, in that railing is the origin of fighting.'²

(8) ' It seems that benefactors like those who receive their favors more than the recipients like the benefactors. . . . The usual explanation is that benefactors are creditors and the recipients debtors. That is, as in the case of loans the debtors would be pleased if their creditors ceased to exist, and the creditors are anxious for the safety of their debtors, so the benefactors desire the existence of the recipients with a view to subsequent favors from the recipients in return, while the latter are not anxious to repay the debt. Epicharmus doubtless would describe the persons who gave this explanation as " looking on the bad side " ; but it appears to be true to human psychology. . . . Still, the true reason seems to lie deeper down in the nature of things. . . . People who have conferred benefactions upon others feel love and affection for the recipients even if the recipients neither are nor can be of service to them ; . . . for every craftsman loves his own works more than these works, if they were endowed with life, would love him. This doubtless is true, above all, of poets ; they have an extraordinary affection for their own poems — an affection like the love of a parent for his children.'³

(9) ' Wherefore, while they speak plausibly, they do not speak truly ; for it is more fitting to state the matter

¹ *Metaphysics* 5 (Δ). 1.

² *Ibid.* 5 (Δ). 24.

³ *Nicomachean Ethics* 9. 7. This passage is our source for Epicharmus, frg. 146, Kaibel, pp. 117-8.

thus than as Epicharmus put the case against Xenophanes. Further, they held their view because they saw all this world of nature in motion, and saw the impossibility of making a true statement about that which is changing; at least, concerning that which everywhere in every respect is changing nothing could truly be affirmed.¹

(10) 'The reason is that their hypotheses and their principles are false.

When the grounds are not fine, it is hard to speak finely, according to Epicharmus:

No sooner 't is uttered than 't is seen to be wrong.'²

(11) 'And since we do all things more by day than by night, the intellect is concerned with the activities of the body. But when sensation is separated from intellect, it has, as it were, a non-sensational action; whence the saying:

Mind sees, and mind hears.'³

These references, with the two allusions to Epicharmus in the *Poetics*,⁴ make a fair showing for that poet in the works of Aristotle.

Aristophanes

(1) 'In using epithets, too, we may characterize an object either from its mean or ugly aspect — as "[Orestes] the matricide," — or from its better aspect — as, "the avenger of his sire." Thus Simonides, when the victor in the mule-race offered him a small fee, declined to write an ode, affecting reluctance to write poetry on "half-asses"; but, when the fee was made large enough, he wrote:

Hail, daughters of storm-footed mares!

¹ *Metaphysics* 4. (I). 5. Epicharmus, frg. 252, Kaibel, p. 138. Compare the allusion to Epicharmus in the *Theaetetus* of Plato, above, p. 111-2.

² *Metaphysics* 13 (M). 9. Epicharmus, frg. 251, Kaibel, p. 138.

³ *Problems* 11. 33. Epicharmus, frg. 249, Kaibel, p. 137.

⁴ See below, pp. 172, 177.

(But they were equally daughters of the asses, too.) Again, without abandoning a given epithet, one may turn it into a diminutive. By a diminutive I mean a form that lessens either the good or the bad in the description; for example, the banter of Aristophanes in the *Babylonians*, where he uses "coinlet" for *coin*, "cloaklet" for *cloak*, "gibelet" for *gibe*, and "plaguelet." '1

(2) 'Such, then, is the nature of antithesis. Pariosis is when the members are equal; paromoiosis when each member has the extremes alike. This must be either at the beginning or the end. At the beginning, the likeness must always be between whole words; and at the end, it may be in the final syllables of words, or inflections of the same word, or in the repetition of a word. Thus, at the beginning:

ἀγρόν γὰρ ἔλαβεν
ἀργὸν παρ' αὐτοῦ.²

(3) From the scholiast on Aristophanes' *Clouds* 552: 'It is clear that the first version of the *Maricas* [of Eupolis] was brought out before the second version of the *Clouds*. Callimachus, says Eratosthenes, censures the *Didascaliae*, because it is held that the *Maricas* was brought out in the third year after the *Clouds*, while the *Didascaliae* specifically state that it appeared before the *Clouds*. "He fails to note," says he, "that, in the *Clouds* as exhibited, no such thing as the following was uttered; but if the utterance is made in the later revision, that occasions no difficulty. The *Didascaliae* clearly refer to the play as exhibited." '3

(4) From Argument 5 (Dindorf) to the *Clouds*: 'The first version of the *Clouds* was exhibited in the archon-

¹ *Rhetoric* 3. 2, trans. by Jebb, pp. 151-2, revised. Aristophanes, frg. 90, Kock 1. 414.

² *Rhetoric* 3. 9, trans. by Jebb, p. 166, revised. Aristophanes, frg. 649, Kock 1. 553. Perhaps one may translate thus: 'Tilth he took, / Tilled not, from him.'

³ Aristotle, frg. 621, Rose, p. 389.

ship of Isarchus, when Cratinus won over it with the *Flagon*, and Ameipsias with the *Connus*.¹

(5) From Argument 3 (Dindorf) to the *Peace*: 'It is said in the *Didascaliae* that Aristophanes exhibited a play bearing the same name as the *Peace*. And hence it is not clear, says Eratosthenes, whether he exhibited the same play [revised] or brought out another that has not been preserved. Crates,² however, knew two plays, writing thus: "Well then, in the *Acharnians* or the *Babylonians*, or in the other *Peace*.'" ³

(6) From Argument 1 (Dindorf) to the *Peace*: 'The poet won with the drama when Alcaeus was archon in the city. First, Eupolis with the *Flatterer*; second, Aristophanes with the *Peace*; third, Leucon with the *Clansmen*.'⁴

(7) From the scholiast on Plato's *Apology*, p. 330 (Bekker): 'Meletus was an inferior tragic poet of Thracian stock, according to Aristophanes in the *Frogs* and the *Storks*, who calls him "son of Laius," since in the year when the *Storks* was exhibited Meletus produced an *Oedipodia*, according to Aristotle in the *Didascaliae*.'⁵

(8) From the scholiast on *Birds* 1379: 'He [Cinesias] is mentioned in the *Frogs*. In the *Didascaliae* Aristotle says there were two of the same name.'⁶

¹ *Ibid.* Regarding Cratinus, I will here record the parallel (to me, a seemingly chance one) noted by Kock, between the reference to Terpander and the Lesbian Ode in Aristotle, frg. 502. 1560a1-3 (frg. 545, Rose), and the similar reference in Cratinus' *Chirones*, frg. 243, Kock 1. 87. Cf. also the reference to this comedy in Zenobius, *Proverbs* 2. 66 = Aristotle, frg. 616, Rose, p. 388.

² Not the comic poet, but the later critic, of the second century B. C.

³ Aristotle, frg. 622, Rose, p. 390.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Aristotle, frg. 628, Rose, p. 392.

⁶ Aristotle, frg. 629, Rose, p. 392.

For a possible reference to the *Daedalus* of Aristophanes, see below, p. 159, under Archippus. To the foregoing items I will add the fact, noted by Kock, that Aristotle speaks of the Delphian knife in *Politics* 1. 2, and Aristophanes speaks of it in frg. 684, which fragment Bergk assigns to the *Aeolosicon* (Kock 1. 560, cf. 3. 724.) For Aristotle's most significant reference to Aristophanes, see above, pp. 1, 29-30, below, p. 172.

Strattis

(1) ' For the verse of Strattis ridiculing Euripides —

Use no perfumery to flavor soup —

contains a truth. Those who nowadays introduce such flavors into beverages deforce our sense of pleasure by habituating us to them, until, from two distinct kinds of sensation combined, pleasure arises as it might from one simple kind.¹

(2) From the scholiast on Aristophanes' *Frogs* 404: ' In the archonship of the said Callias, according to Aristotle, it was decreed that two choregi jointly should defray the costs of the chorus at the Dionysia for the tragedies and the comedies; so that perhaps there was some reduction of expense for the contest at the Lenaea. Not long after, Cinesias finally abolished the provision for choruses; and hence in the drama aimed at him Strattis said: " The stage of the chorus-killing Cinesias." ' ²

Plato (the comic poet)

(1) ' By ancient witnesses I mean the poets and other celebrities whose judgments stand on record. . . . Recent witnesses are any well-known persons who have decided a point, as their discussions are useful to those who are contending about the same questions. Thus Eubulus [the orator] employed against Chares the saying of Plato [? the comic poet] against Archibius that " the avowal of rascality has gained ground at Athens." ' ³

¹ Aristotle, *De Sensu* 5, trans. by Beare, revised. The line is from the *Phoenissae* of Strattis, frg. 45, Kock 1. 724-5.

² Aristotle, frg. 630, Rose, p. 392 (frg. 619, Heitz); cf. Haigh, p. 54. The common proverb, ' Joining flax to flax,' occurs in Aristotle, *Physica Auscultatio* 3. 6, and also in Strattis, *Potamii*, frg. 38, Kock 1. 722 (cf. Kock 3. 730); but, if Aristotle had to take it from a literary source, he could find it in Plato, *Euthydemus* 298c.

³ *Rhetoric* 1. 15, trans. by Jebb, pp. 62, 63, revised. Meineke (2. 692, frg. 41) identifies the ' Plato' here mentioned with the comic poet of that name, while Spengel takes the reference to be to the philosopher; see Kock 1. 660-1, frg. 219. And compare above, p. 105.

Archippus

(1) From Photius, *Lexicon*, s. v. ὄνου σκιά: 'Aristotle in the *Didascaliae* mentions the title of a drama, the *Ass's Shadow*.'¹

Compare Zenobius, *Proverbs* 6. 28, ὑπὲρ ὄνου σκιάς: 'And there was a comedy by Archippus, the *Ass's Shadow*.'²

To judge from Photius, the *Didascaliae* may have mentioned the *Daedalus* of Aristophanes in the same connection.³

Philippus or Eubulus

(1) 'Some say that the soul in fact moves the body in which it is, in the same way as it moves itself; so, for instance, Democritus. And herein he resembled Philippus the comic poet; for the latter says that Daedalus endowed the wooden Aphrodite with motion by pouring in quicksilver.'⁴

Anaxandrides

It will be remembered that the third of the following references has been connected with this poet by mere conjecture.

(1) 'Metaphors are of four kinds; of these the most popular are the "proportional." Of this kind was the saying of Pericles that the youth who had perished in the war had vanished from the city in such sort as if the spring were taken out of the year. . . . Or take the iambic line in Anaxandrides about the daughters who had long gone unmarried. [A speaker in the comedy says]:

¹ Aristotle, *frg.* 625, Rose, p. 391.

² *Ibid.*

³ See *Aristotelis Fragmenta*, ed. by Heitz, Paris, 1869, p. 304 (*frg.* 616).

⁴ *De Anima* 1. 3. Aristotle refers to the comedy entitled *Daedalus*, ascribed to Philippus, son of Aristophanes, or (preferably) to Eubulus; there may be some confusion of two plays with the same name. See Meineke 1. 340-3; Kock 2. 172-3.

The marriage-bonds of the maidens [= spinsters], I believe, are overdue.¹

(2) 'Of the same sort [clever sayings] is the line that has been admired in Anaxandrides:

Well is it to die ere one has done a thing worthy of death; for this is equivalent to saying, "It is a worthy thing to die without being worthy to die."'²

(? 3) "'A worthy man should wed a worthy wife." But this is not clever.' [That is, it is platitudinous.]³

(4) 'But when we employ reiteration, we must also vary. . . . Philemon the actor did this in delivering the passage about "Rhadamanthus and Palamedes" in the *Gerontomania* of Anaxandrides, and similarly in varying the pronunciation of "I" in the Prologue to *The Good Men*.⁴

(5) 'The incontinent person, then, may be compared to a State which passes all such bills as it ought to pass, and has excellent laws, but does not carry them out — as Anaxandrides taunted:

'T was the State's will; the State recks not of law.'⁵

For Alexis, see above, p. 150, below, p. 201. For Antiphanes, see above, pp. 34, 149. For Ameipsias, see above, p. 157, under Aristophanes (4). For Chionides, see below, p. 172. For Crates, see below, p. 177. For Cratinus, see above, p. 157 and footnote, under Aristoph-

¹ *Rhetoric* 3. 10. Aristotle quotes from an unidentified play of Anaxandrides: frg. 68, Kock 2. 162. The conditions would be met by a comedy on the tale of the Suppliant Maidens. In the *American Journal of Philology* 41. 50 I suggest the Herald of King Aegyptus as a possibility for the speaker.

² *Rhetoric* 3. 11; Anaxandrides, frg. 64, Kock 2. 161.

³ *Rhetoric* 3. 11. The line is attributed to Anaxandrides: frg. 79, Kock 2. 164. Cf. *Rhetoric*, ed. by Cope-Sandys, 3. 137, bottom; Spengel, *Artium Scriptores*, p. 20; Meineke 3. 201. Kock (as before) includes the line under the disputed fragments of the poet.

⁴ *Rhetoric* 3. 12. For the *Gerontomania* see Kock 2. 138-9, frg. 9 and (especially) 10. Kock (2. 140) ascribes *The Good Men* (*Εὐαεφεῖς*) to Anaxandrides on the sole authority of this passage in Aristotle.

⁵ *Nicomachean Ethics* 7. 11, trans. by Welldon, p. 233, revised.

anes (4). For Eupolis, see above, pp. 156–7, under Aristophanes (3) and (6). For Magnes, see below, p. 172. For Phormis, see below, p. 177.

Hegemon of Thasos, mentioned by Aristotle as a parodist (see below, p. 170), was also a comic poet, and the Nicochares mentioned with him may have been the comic poet of that name.

XIV

REFERENCES TO THE COMIC CHORUS IN WORKS OTHER THAN THE *POETICS*

(1) From Harpocration, *Lexicon*, s. v. διδάσκαλος: ‘They give the name “teachers” [διδάσκαλοι—i. e., of the chorus] to the poets who are authors of dithyrambs, or of comedies, or of tragedies. Antiphon in his work *On the Choral Dancer* says that Pantacles was an inferior διδάσκαλος. And that Pantacles was a poet Aristotle has made clear in the *Didascaliae*.’¹

(2) From the scholiast on Aristophanes’ *Frogs* 404: ‘In the archonship of the said Callias, according to Aristotle, it was decreed that two choregi jointly should defray the costs of the chorus at the Dionysia for the tragedies and the comedies.’²

(3) ‘Next he [the archon] assigns choregi to the tragic poets, choosing three of the richest persons out of the whole body of Athenians. Formerly he used also to assign five choregi to the comic poets, but now the tribes provide the choregi for them. Then he receives the choregi who have been appointed by the tribes for the men’s and boys’ choruses and the comic poets at the Dionysia.’³

¹ Aristotle, frg. 624, Rose, p. 391.

² Aristotle, frg. 630, Rose, p. 392. Cf. above, p. 158.

³ Aristotle, *Constitution of Athens* 56, trans. by Kenyon, in the Oxford translation of Aristotle, ed. by Ross, 1920.

(4) ' Since the State is a partnership, and is a partnership of citizens in a constitution, when the form of the government changes and becomes different, then it may be supposed that the State is no longer the same ; just as a tragic differs from a comic chorus, although the members of both may be identical. And in this manner we speak of every union or composition of elements as different when the form of their composition alters ; for example, a scale containing the same sounds is said to be different, accordingly as the Dorian or the Phrygian mode is employed.'¹

(5) ' At Lacedaemon there was a choregus who led the chorus with a flute, and at Athens the instrument became so popular that most freemen could play upon it. The popularity is shown by the tablet which Thrasippus dedicated when he furnished the chorus to Ecphantides.'²

(6) ' The vulgar man . . . spends large sums upon trifles, and makes a display which is offensive to good taste, . . . for example, . . . if he provides a comic chorus, by bringing the members of it on to the stage in purple dresses, after the manner of the Megarians.'³

XV

SCATTERED PASSAGES ON LAUGHTER

The Greek verb for ' smile ' does not occur in the writings of Aristotle ; but we find a number of passages showing an interest, more or less scientific, in the act of laughing, in the laughter of infants, and in tickling-matches.

(1) ' And when they are awake infants do not laugh, but asleep they both weep and laugh.'⁴

¹ *Politics* 3. 3 ; Jowett's translation revised by Ross, in the Oxford translation of Aristotle.

² *Ibid.* 8. 6 ; same translation.

³ *Nicomachean Ethics* 4. 6, trans. by Welldon, p. 111.

⁴ *De Generatione Animalium* 5. 1.

(2) ' Until the child is forty days old it neither laughs nor weeps during waking hours, but at night it sometimes does both ; nor for the most part does it notice when it is tickled. In the main it spends its time in sleep.'¹

(3) ' That heating of it [the midriff] affects sensation rapidly and in a notable manner is shown by the phenomena of laughter ; for when men are tickled they are quickly set a-laughing, because the motion quickly reaches this part, and, heating it though but slightly, yet manifestly so disturbs the mental action as to occasion movements that are independent of the will. That man alone is affected by tickling is due first to the delicacy of his skin, and secondly to his being the only animal that laughs ; for to be tickled is to be set in laughter, the laughter being produced by such a motion as mentioned of the region of the armpit. . . .

' Moreover, among the Barbarians, where heads are chopped off with great rapidity, nothing of the kind [a dissevered head speaking] has ever yet occurred. Why, again, does not the like occur in the case of other animals than man ? For that none of them should laugh, when their midriff is wounded, is but what one would expect ; for no animal but man ever laughs.'²

(4) ' Why is it that no one tickles himself ?

' Is it not because one is tickled less even by another when the act is expected, and more when one does not see the other person, so that the effect is minimized when one is aware of the experience ? Laughter is a sort of surprise and deception — and that is why people laugh when they are struck in the midriff ; for it is not by being struck in any chance spot that we are made to laugh. What escapes notice deceives us ; and that is why the same thing sometimes is, and sometimes is not, a cause of laughter.'³

¹ *Historia Animalium* 7. 10.

² *De Partibus Animalium* 3. 10, trans. by Ogle in the Oxford translation of Aristotle, ed. by Smith and Ross, 1911, revised.

³ *Problems* 35. 6.

(5) 'Why is it that we laugh when we are tickled about the armpit, and do not when tickled elsewhere?'¹

The answer is given that, when too much breath accumulates, we expel it.

(6) 'Why is it that in weeping the voice is higher, while in laughing it is lower?'²

'Is it not because, in the one case, we set the breath in motion only a little, through weakness, and, in the other, much, with the result that the breath is carried rapidly? But the rapid air makes the high tone; for that which is expelled from a tense body is put in rapid motion. On the contrary, when we laugh we are relaxed. And when men are sick the voice is high, for they set little air in motion; whereas the others move it above. Further, in laughing, the air we throw off is hot. In weeping, on the other hand, the effect of grief is, as it were, a cooling of the region of the chest, and the breath that is expelled is cooler. Now the heat sets much air in motion, so that it is carried far, but the cold sets little. The same thing is observed in the case of flutes; for when the players are warm, and blow warm air in, the sound they produce is much lower.'²

(7) 'Why is it that in weeping the voice is higher, while in laughing it is lower?'³

'Is it not because in weeping one tightens and draws together the mouth as one utters sounds? By the tightening, then, the air within is set in rapid motion, and is carried through the narrow opening of the mouth, borne more rapidly. Through both causes it is that the voice becomes sharper. On the contrary, in laughing the tension is relaxed, and the mouth is opened wide. And when the air goes out in a wide and broad stream, the sound is naturally low.'³

(8) 'It is no wonder [in respect to continence and incontinence], if a person is mastered by strong and

¹ *Problems* 35. 8.

² *Ibid.* 11. 13; cf. 11. 50.

³ *Ibid.* 11. 15; cf. 11. 50.

overwhelming pleasures or pains ; nay, it is pardonable, if he struggles against them like Philoctetes when bitten by the snake in the play of Theodectes, or like Cercyon in the *Alope* of Carcinus, or like people who in trying to suppress their laughter burst out in a loud guffaw, as happened to Xenophantus.¹

(9) ' For as people can not be tickled if they are themselves the beginners in a tickling-match, so some people if they anticipate or foresee what is coming, and have roused themselves and their reason to resist it before it comes, are not overcome by their emotion, whether it be pleasant or painful.' ²

(10) ' Why do we restrain our laughter less in the presence of familiar friends ?

' Is it not the case that when the suspense is great, the release is easily effected ? Now good will tends rather to the utterance of the laughable, and hence effects the release.'³

¹ *Nicomachean Ethics* 7. 8, trans. by Weldon, p. 226. Nothing further is known regarding the story of Xenophantus.

² *Ibid.*, trans. by Weldon, p. 227.

³ *Problems* 28. 8.

THE *POETICS* OF ARISTOTLE APPLIED TO COMEDY

[A theory of comedy derived from what Aristotle says of this form of art, or inferred from what he says of other forms, in his *Poetics*; with additional comments, and illustrations from various sources. The treatment in the main, and the wording to a considerable extent, follow my 'Amplified Version.' Longer additions, and most of the illustrations, are enclosed in square brackets; but it should not be inferred that passages not so enclosed adhere to the letter, rather than the spirit, of the original. The direct references to comedy in the *Poetics* are printed in bold-face types.]

In the *Poetics* Aristotle offers to discuss the nature of the poetic art in general, and to treat of the several species of poetry, one of which is comedy; above all with regard to the essential quality or 'power' (= function) of each species. Accordingly, he would (in all probability) lay stress upon the function of comedy — that is, upon the characteristic effect produced by the work of the comic poet on the trained sensibilities of the judicious spectator or reader. And he would therefore examine that organic structure of the comic play as a whole which is indispensable to the composition of an ideally effective poem, including in his survey the number and nature of the formative elements, and such other points as fall within the same inquiry respecting form and function.

Following the natural order, we begin with what is fundamental to poetry as a genus, namely the principle of 'imitation' — that is, of artistic representation. **Comedy**, like epic poetry, tragedy, dithyrambic poetry, and most flute-playing and lyre-playing [as also painting and sculpture], is in its general nature a

form of imitation ; [that is, the comic poet in his work 'imitates' or re-presents something — his idea or conception — through an arrangement of certain symbols such as words or notes. Nowadays we should call the formation of his idea, and his 'imitation' of the idea, an artistic creation.] But, having this in common with other kinds of art that it is a form of imitation, comedy differs from one or another of them in three respects ; for among the imitative arts there are differences in —

Comedy, like the other imitative arts, represents some object in a medium chosen by the artist

(1) The means by which they imitate — the 'medium.' [Thus comedy employs language for its medium, while sculpture employs stone, and painting employs pigments.]

(2) The objects as these are represented. [One art may represent the same object as worse, and another may represent it as better, than the object ordinarily is. Comedy and mock-heroic poetry, for example, represent men and their actions as worse than they commonly are ; tragedy and epic poetry, as better.]

(3) The manner in which these objects are imitated. [Comedy, for example, like tragedy, directly presents the actions of men, whereas epic poetry relates such actions.]

We may further explain the term means, or 'medium.' As painters (some by art [i. e., by theory], others by constant practice) represent the likenesses of many things through the medium of colors and lines, so there are those who for their medium employ the voice, as in singing. And so in the group of arts to which comedy belongs, the imitation of the objects is produced in the medium of rhythm, language, and harmony, these three media being used either singly or in combination. For example, in flute-playing and lyre-playing the media are harmony and rhythm combined ; as in any other arts having a similar effect — for

I. The means

Examples from other arts, as painting, singing, instrumental music, and dancing

instance, imitation on the Pan-pipes. [Thus a comic action might be produced in unadorned prose ('language' pure and simple), or in metre ('language' plus definitely recurrent 'rhythm'), or in metrical language intended to be sung ('language' plus 'rhythm' plus sung 'harmony'). For the first case, see Shakespeare, *Tempest*, scene one; for the second, *Tempest*, scene two; for the third, *Tempest* 1. 2. 375-385.] In the art of dancing, the medium is rhythm alone, without harmony; for in this art the performers also represent human character, and what men feel and do, and the medium of this imitation is rhythm in bodily movement. [The remark has an additional value for comedy, as for tragedy, since each may employ this art, as in the motions of the chorus. Both kinds of drama likewise employ the singing voice as well as the music of the flute and the lyre.]

An art with
the medium of
language alone,
whether met-
rical or not

Then there is a form of art in which the medium of imitation is language alone, without harmony, and that, too, whether the language be metrical or not; if it be metrical language, there may be one single sort of metre, or several sorts in conjunction. This form of imitation thus far lacks a name; since we have no term that might be applied in common to the mimes of a Sophron or Xenarchus and the Socratic dialogues; nor should we have a term even if the imitation in these cases employed the medium of iambic, elegiac, or any other such metre. People have a way, it is true, of connecting the word 'poet' (that is, *maker*) with the name of one or another kind of verse, so that they talk of 'elegiac poets,' and 'epic' (that is, hexameter) 'poets,' as if it were not the principle of imitation that characterized the artist — as if one might term them all poets indiscriminately because of the metre. [But the question of terminology growing out of metrical considerations is negligible for comedy. As versified

The prose
mime, and the
dialogue

natural science is not poetry; as it is the principle of imitation, not the metre, that differentiates poetry in general, and comedy as a branch of it, from what is not poetry; so the comic prose mimes of Sophron, and the *Symposium* of Plato (or 'Socratic Conversations' generally — with their close relation to the mime), are in essence allied to comedy. The word *mime* has the same root as *mimesis* (that is, 'imitation'). No one word in Greek criticism answers to our 'literature.']

But **comedy** is one of the arts which **combine all the media enumerated, namely, rhythm, melody, and metrical language**; as do tragedy and dithyrambic and nomic poetry. Yet here again there is a difference; for in dithyrambic and nomic poetry all three media are employed together, whereas in comedy and tragedy they are brought in separately. [If Aristotle's 'rhythm' here refers to the motions of the chorus, a discrepancy in part disappears (see below, pp. 174, 179); if not, we must say, more strictly, that in Aristophanic comedy 'it is only the music that comes in intermittently, in the choral parts' (to adopt the language of Bywater).]

Comedy employs all three media: rhythm, melody, and metre

But not all continuously

We turn now to the objects which the poet or other artist represents: these are human beings in action — men and women doing or undergoing something. And **the agents must be either of a lower or a higher type**; for in virtually every case the differences in the characters represented proceed from this primary distinction, since it is the line between virtue and vice that divides us all in real life. It follows that in the imitation the agents must be represented as worse than we ourselves, or some such men as we, or better than we. Thus, to take our instance from the painters, Pauson depicted men worse than the average, Dionysius men like ourselves, and Polygnotus men better than the average. [Or a modern parallel: the subjects of Hogarth are of a lower type, and those of the Dutch

CHAPTER 2

2. The object: men in action

The agents must be either below the average, or average men, or above the average

and Flemish portrait-painters are near to the average level of humanity, while those of Raphael are of a higher type. Aristotle has in mind the tendency of one painter to lower, and of another to ennoble, a given subject from the level of ordinary life ; so a caricaturist accentuates ugliness in men of his time.]

It is clear that each of the modes of imitation we have noted will admit of these differences of elevation in the object as imitated, and **will be a separate art in so far as there is this difference in representing the object as lower**, or higher, or midway between the two extremes. Such diversities are possible even in dancing and flute-playing and lyre-playing ; and similarly in the above-mentioned nameless art (including prose dialogues and prose mimes) without music, and in metrical compositions without music. Thus the agents represented by Homer are better than we ; the agents in the epic of the commonplace by Cleophon are on our level ; and those in the mock-heroic travesty of Homer by **Hegemon of Thasos — the first author to take up parody as a special form of poetry — are below the average**, as are the personages in the mock-heroic *Diliad* of Nicocharēs. [*Diliad* (with a word-play on *Iliad*) — as it were, ‘The Poltroniad.’ Another illustration would be this : the knights in Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*, or in Tennyson’s *Idylls of the King*, are elevated and idealized ; the monks in Frere’s *King Arthur and his Round Table* are of a lower type ; and the agents in the modern realistic novel are mostly persons like ourselves.] The same distinction holds good in dithyrambs and in nomes ; for example, in the lower types in the nomes of Argas and the higher in those of . . . , and in the dithyrambic tale by **Philoxenus**, who rendered the **Cyclops** ignoble, and that of Timotheus, who elevated the type. [There is a gap in the text, and the interpretation is doubtful. ‘Argas’ is a conjecture,

Dancing and instrumental music may show agents below the average

The dialogue and the mime likewise

Verse also, as in Hegemon the parodist and in Nicocharēs with his mock-epic

So also the nome

And the dithyramb : Philoxenus debases the Cyclops

and what is said of Philoxenus is a plausible supposition. — Polyphemus, already a half-comic personage in the *Odyssey*, became a stock figure in various kinds of poetry. For the comic tradition, compare the *Cyclops* of Euripides with the Cyclops in Theocritus, *Idyls* 6 and 11.] Now in respect to the objects of imitation, **this difference sets comedy apart from tragedy. Comedy tends to represent the agents as worse, and tragedy as better, than the men of our day.** [That is, the personages of comedy are more often below the average than average — though the average is poor. Thus in Molière the hero of *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* is a kind of average citizen, made ridiculous — that is, depressed below the average; while Harpagon in *L'Avare* and Tartuffe are types already below the average.]

Comedy differs from tragedy in that its agents are worse rather than better

There is yet a third among these differences, namely, a difference touching the manner in which a given object [for example, a boor in a contest with a buffoon] may be imitated. Let us suppose that the object of the imitation remains the same [say, ludicrous men in a contest], and likewise the medium [say, metrical language]. Under these conditions, (1) the poet may produce his work in narrative, either (a) as Homer does, in an assumed rôle, or (b) in his own words, without changing his personality; or, on the other hand, (2) all the imitated personages may be presented as living and moving before us. [Homer, in fact, sometimes speaks in his own person, but for the most part makes fictitious personages speak; see, for example, the Homeric description of Thersites, followed by the speech put into the mouth of Thersites by the poet (*Iliad* 2. 211–224, 225–242). The method of direct presentation is illustrated by any comedy of Aristophanes (as the *Plutus*) or of any other comic poet (say, Molière's *L'Avare*).]

CHAPTER 3 3. The manner

A comic story may be given as narrative, either in fictitious speeches, or by the poet narrating throughout

Or it may be directly presented as drama

These three differences there are, then, as was said at first, in the nature of the imitation: a difference in

the medium, a difference in the objects, and a difference in the manner. The distinction enables us to indicate points of similarity in certain kinds of art. Thus as an imitator Sophocles would be on one side akin to Homer, since both represent agents of a higher type; and on another to Aristophanes, since both represent personages as experiencing and doing. [In this striking passage the emphasis has been left where Aristotle puts it. He could hardly recommend Aristophanes more signally as the leading comic poet than by thus linking him with Homer, the fountain-head of Greek poetry, and with Sophocles, whose *Oedipus the King* counts in the *Poetics* as the nearly perfect tragedy. But the shift of emphasis for comedy is easily made: In respect to the objects imitated, the dramatist Aristophanes is akin to the narrative poet Homer (in the *Margites*; see below, p. 175), since both represent personages of a lower type; and in respect to the manner of imitation, the comedies of Aristophanes are akin to the tragedies of Sophocles, since both poets represent personages directly as experiencing and doing.] **Indeed, according to some, herein lies the reason why comedies and tragedies are called 'dramas,' namely, because they represent men as 'doing' [δρῶντες, from the verb δρᾶν]. Hence also the Dorians lay claim to the invention of tragedy as well as comedy; for comedy is claimed by the Megarians [= Dorians] — by those of Greece, who contend that it arose among them at the time when Megara became a democracy, and on the other hand by the Megarians of Sicily, on the ground that the first true comic poet, Epicharmus, came from there, and was much earlier than the Attic comic poets Chionides and Magnes; even tragedy is claimed by certain Dorians of the Peloponnese [i. e., the Sicyonians]. Now these claims are put forward as resting upon the etymology of the words 'comedy'**

Aristophanes, like Sophocles, directly presents men in action

Digression on the etymology of comedy and drama

Claims of Megara, Sicily, and Athens to the invention of comedy

Epicharmus a Sicilian, earlier than Chionides and Magnes of Attica, according to the Dorians

and 'drama.' They [the Dorians] say that their term for rural hamlets is not *demes*, as with the Athenians, but *comae*; and they assume that 'comedians' acquired their name, not from *κωμάζειν* ['to revel'], but from their habit of strolling about from village to village [*κζτᾶ κώμας*], when a lack of appreciation forced them out of the city. ['Comedy' does, however, seem to be connected by derivation with the verb *κωμάζειν*, 'to revel,' and with the *comus*, or wandering dance of the phallic worshippers.] As for the etymology of 'drama,' they allege that the Dorian word for 'doing' is not *πράττειν*, as with the Athenians, but *δρᾶν*. [Aristotle, however, employs *δρᾶν* (and also *πράττειν*) as a word in good usage at Athens.]

As for its natural origin, comedy owes its being to the two causes which have given rise to poetry in general. Of these causes, each of them inherent in the nature of man, the first is the habit of imitation; for to imitate is instinctive with mankind from childhood; and, among living creatures, man differs from the rest in that he is the most imitative, and learns at first through imitation. Secondly, all men take a natural pleasure in the results of imitation—a pleasure to which the facts of experience bear witness; for even where the original objects are repulsive, as the most objectionable of the lower animals, or dead bodies, we still delight to contemplate their forms in the most accurate representations. [For comedy, compare the huge beetle represented in the *Peace* of Aristophanes; the titles (indicating the choruses) of his *Wasps* and *Frogs*; and the Corpse in *Frogs* 169–177. Though Aristotle is not at this point thinking of comedy, his remark has a wide range of application in that field, when allowance is made for the comic modifications of truth, once this is exactly observed.] The explanation

CHAPTER 4

Poetry (and hence comedy) has its origin in two natural instincts

1. The impulse to imitate

2. The natural delight in the results

Even where the original objects are unpleasant

The pleasure
in the proc-
ess of re-
cognition

of this delight lies in a further characteristic of our species, the appetite for learning; for among human pleasures that of learning is the keenest — not only to the scholarly, but to the rest of mankind as well, however briefly the rest enjoy it. Accordingly, the reason why men delight in pictures is that in the act of contemplating one they are acquiring knowledge, and draw an inference to the effect that ‘This is So-and-so.’ Consequently, if we happen not to have seen the original, any pleasure arising from the picture will be due, not to the imitation as such, but to the execution, or the coloring, or some similar cause.

Imitation,
music, and
rhythm are
innate in man

To imitate, then, is natural to us as men; just as our sense of musical harmony, and our sense of rhythm, are natural — and it is to be noted that metre plainly falls under the general head of rhythm. Accordingly, being from the outset possessed of these natural endowments, and developing them by gradual and, in the main, slight advances, men brought poetry into existence out of their improvisations.

The first
stages of
poetry

Improvisa-
tions

Two main di-
visions of
poetry

Poetry now split up into two varieties, corresponding to a difference in the moral bent of the poets; for while the graver spirits represented noble actions and the deeds of superior men, the lighter represented the doings of the baser sort. And whereas others composed hymns and panegyrics, these latter at first composed lampoons. We are unable, it is true, to mention a poem in the lampooning vein by any of the poets before Homer, though there probably were many such authors among them. But beginning with Homer we have specimens, such as the *Margites* and other poems of similar sort. In these, its inherent suitability brought into use an iambic metre; and the reason why we now employ the term ‘iambic’ for *satirical* is that those poets formerly

Hymns

Lampoons

The Homeric
Margites

Origin and
meaning of
‘iambic’

lampooned, or 'iambized,' one another in this metre. Of the early poets, accordingly, some became authors of iambic verse, and others of heroic.

But **Homer**, who shared in both tendencies, was superior to the other poets of either class. In the serious style he stands alone, not only through the general excellence of his imitations, but through their dramatic quality as well. So also was he superior in the comic vein, since he **first marked out the general lines of comedy**, by rendering the ludicrous dramatic — not composing personal invective ; for the *Margites* bears the same relation to comedy as the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* bear to tragedy. [The *Margites*, of post-Homeric origin, is known to us only in a few scant fragments ; Aristotle's estimate doubtless rested upon his conception of the whole, and especially of the plot in relation to the hero. In the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* there are incidents that betray the spirit of comedy ; for example, the story of Thersites (*Iliad* 2. 211 ff.), the exchange of gifts between Diomedes and Glaucus (6. 232–236), the deception of Polyphemus by Odysseus (*Odyssey* 9. 353–374, 403–460), the grotesque episode of Aeolus and the wind-bag (10. 17–76), and the fight between Irus and Odysseus (18. 1–107). Indeed, mainly because of the happy issue for Odysseus, Aristotle says (see below, p. 201) that the pleasure arising from the *Odyssey* is rather the one that belongs to comedy.]

The Homeric *Margites* prefigures true comedy

When tragedy and comedy appeared, however, those poets with a natural bent in one direction became authors of comedies, instead of iambs ; and those with a natural bent in the other became producers of tragedy, instead of epics ; for these newer forms were greater and were in higher esteem than the former.

In time, comedy, a more notable type, attracted poets with the natural bent

Comedy originated in improvisations, as did tragedy also ; for tragedy took its beginning from the improvising poet-leaders in the dithyrambic chorus of satyrs ;

Comedy began in the improvisations of the leaders in the phallic procession

and comedy from the leaders of the phallic processional song and dance, the performance of which continues as an institution in many of the Greek cities.

[In addition to other gradual changes in tragedy,] there was a change in the magnitude of the action represented, from the little plots of the primitive form; and, with its development out of the satyr-play, tragedy also grew away from a ludicrous diction. Thus, at a late period, however, it assumed its characteristic elevation of tone, and the iambic metre replaced the trochaic tetrameter. Indeed, the reason for the early use of the tetrameter was that tragedy had the quality of the satyr-play, and was more on the order of dancing. But as soon as the element of spoken discourse entered in, nature itself found the appropriate metre—the iambic; for this is the readiest metre in speaking.

CHAPTER 5

The agents in comedy, and the nature of the ludicrous

Comedy, as has been said, is an artistic imitation of persons of an inferior moral bent; faulty, however, not in any and every way, but only in so far as their shortcomings are ludicrous; for the ludicrous is a part or species, not all, of the genus ugly. It may be defined as that kind of shortcoming and deformity [or disproportion] which does not strike us as painful, and is not harmful [or 'corrupting']; a ready example is afforded by the comic mask, which is ludicrous, being ugly and distorted, without any suggestion of pain.

The comic mask is an example

[The faults which it would appear were suitable for comic characters might therefore be almost, if not quite, all the vices listed in *Nicomachean Ethics* 2. 7, so long as these vices produced neither pain nor harm; but, particularly, certain of the vices that were nearer to the mean state, or state of virtue (rather than those less resembling this), such as foolhardiness, prodigality, vulgarity, vanity, impassivity, self-depreciation (= 'irony'), buffoonery, obsequiousness or flattery, and bash-

fulness. Yet the opposite and more extreme vices might be so represented as not to be painful or injurious — as cowardice, illiberality or avarice, boastfulness, boorishness; perhaps also quarrelsomeness, licentiousness, and envy; possibly shamelessness and malice. It has been thought by some that Aristotle deemed the buffoon or low, jesting parasite, the ironical man or type of dissembled ignorance, and the boastful man or type of impostors and braggarts, as *par excellence* the characters (or *ethe*) of comedy; see above, pp. 118–9, and the *Tractatus Coislinianus*, below, pp. 226, 262–5. It is often possible to reduce to one of these last three types a character whose comic flaw at first might seem to be one of the other vices; so the incontinent Tartuffe of Molière — as indeed the poet suggests by appending the name, ‘The Impostor.’ In other cases, as Harpagon in Molière’s *L’Avare*, the flaw in character which gives rise to the comic effect is clearly not one of these three, but, as in *L’Avare*, avarice, or, as in *Le Malade Imaginaire*, cowardice or some other vice.]

While the successive changes which tragedy underwent, and the authors of those changes, have not escaped notice, **there is no record**, says Aristotle, **of the early development of comedy, for the reason that at first this form of drama was not treated as a matter of much concern.** Not until late in the progress of comedy was the comic poet provided by the magistrate with a chorus; until then the performers were simply unpaid volunteers. And comedy had already taken definite shape by the time we begin to have a record of those who are termed poets in this kind. Who was responsible for introducing personages, or prologues, or additional actors — concerning these and like details we are in ignorance. But the construction of plots came from Sicily, for Epicharmus and Phormis came from there; and, of Athenian comic poets, Crates was the first to discard personal invective and to construct generalized

Little is known about the earlier stages of comedy

Sicilian origin of comic plots: Epicharmus and Phormis

The Athenian Crates, and the generalized plot or fable

plots and fables. [The active career of Crates just preceded that of Aristophanes, the second of whose extant comedies, the *Knights*, contains a reference to the elder poet, who probably was then dead.]

As may be seen [compare above, p. 172], mock-heroic poetry has thus much in common with comedy: it is an imitation, in verse, of ludicrous events. Still there is a difference (on the metrical side) in the medium of imitation, as well as a difference in the manner; for the mock-epic employs one and the same metre throughout, whereas comedy employs more than one metre; and the mock-epic is in the form of a tale that is told, and not, like comedy, of an action directly presented. And there is further a difference in length, since the narrative poem is not restricted to any fixed limit of time, whereas a comedy is restricted by the conventions of the stage. [In Aristotle's view, the number of lines is related to the length of time represented by the action. The narrative poem may represent a long time, and hence may itself be long; whereas the drama commonly represents a briefer time, and hence will be shorter. In speaking of the epic poem and tragedy, he says that at first this difference did not exist, neither being limited in point of time, but that later, in his own day, writers of tragedy aimed to confine the action within the limits of one revolution of the sun, or at all events not to exceed this interval by very much. This is the only reference to what long afterwards (never by him) was called the 'unity of time'; it is not an injunction, but an observation subordinate to his discussion of the length of a poem. He nowhere refers to anything like a 'unity of place.' In fact, he mentions but two 'unities'—unity of action, and 'oneness' of hero, which latter, he says, does not constitute oneness of plot. It may be noted, however, that the comedies of Aristophanes in general may be regarded as severally occurring within the limits of one revolution of the sun.] Finally, the comic narrative and comedy differ in respect to their

Narrative [comic] poetry compared with [comic] drama

A difference in the medium

A difference in the manner

A difference in length

Formative elements common to both species

formative elements; for four of these elements [plot, *ethos*, *dianoia*, and diction] are common to both kinds of poetry, and two [music and spectacle] are peculiar to comedy. [See below, pp. 215–6.] All the formative elements of a comic narrative poem are to be found in comedy; but not all the formative elements of comedy are included in a comic narrative poem. It follows that a person who can tell what is good or bad in the composition of a comedy can do the same for a comic narrative, too.

A good judge
of [comic]
drama is a
good judge
of [comic]
narrative

. . . To define: a comedy is the artistic imitation of an action which is ludicrous (or mirthful), organically complete, and of a proper length; so much for the object imitated. As for the medium, the imitation is produced in language with accessories that give pleasure, one kind of accessory being introduced in one part, and another in another part, of the whole. As for the manner, the imitation is itself in the form of an action carried on by persons — it is not narrated. [(?) And as for the end or function resulting from the imitation of such an object in such a medium and in such a manner, it is to arouse, and by arousing to relieve, the emotions proper to comedy. (See above, pp. 60–98, below, pp. 224, 228.) At all events, the end of comedy is to arouse laughter by the right means, and to give pleasure to the judicious.] By language with accessories that give pleasure is meant language which is simply rhythmical or metrical, language which is delivered in recitative, and language which is uttered in song (with music). And by the separate introduction of one kind of accessory in one part, and of another in another part, is meant that some parts of the comedy are worked out in verse alone, without being sung or chanted, and others again in the form of singing or chanting.

CHAPTER 6

[Aristotle's
definition of
tragedy adapt-
ed to comedy]

[Gudeman, p. 11, f.n., thinks that the more exact

explanation of catharsis referred to in *Politics* 8.7 has been lost from the *Poetics* at this point, immediately following the definition of tragedy. The application to comedy might be expected at a later point in the work. As we have noted in the Introduction, it has been generally assumed that, as Aristotle thought the arousal and relief, or 'catharsis,' of pity and fear, and the resultant pleasure, to be the proper effect of tragedy, so he would recognize some sort of catharsis, and the resultant pleasure, to be the proper end of comedy, basing his opinion upon the observable effect of the best comedies on the spectator or reader. And this effect would be, so to speak, both psychological and physiological — as in tragedy we have the bodily shiver accompanying fear, and the flow of tears accompanying pity. The inward feeling displays itself outwardly, emotion and bodily reaction being in fact so closely allied as to be virtually one and the same thing. The observable effects of comedy are on the one hand a heightened sense of well-being, accompanied by a thrill of joy, and even cries of joy, such as cheering, and on the other hand the phenomena of laughter.

According to Aristotle, the pleasure derived from tragedy is partly direct, partly indirect. There is the direct pleasure we derive from beholding a good representation; this, the satisfaction of the universal desire for learning, arises from the play, or 'imitation,' as a whole, but also from particular elements in the play such as 'recognitions,' or discoveries of identity. And there are additional direct pleasures arising from rhythmical or metrical composition, from the musical element (which contributes much to the effect of the whole), and from the element of 'spectacle' (costume, painted scenery, and the like). This last, though adventitious, and not properly the concern of the art of poetry, still is not negligible. Then there is the indirect satisfaction, peculiar to tragedy, arising from the relief or 'purgation' of pity and fear. In comedy, therefore, we might expect him to appreciate both positive and negative sources of pleasure. The pleasures connected with imitation, with discoveries or recognitions, with

rhythm, music, and spectacle, would be positive. And there is also the positive satisfaction arising from the happy issue of the story. On the negative side, and doubtless more especially, there would be the relief of one or more emotions, associated with the outward act of laughter. The question is, what will be the emotional state or inward tension which is relieved by the laughter of comedy, as the overplus of pity and fear common to everyday life is relieved by the suspense and tears of tragedy? The matter has been discussed at some length in the Introduction (pp. 63–76). Here we shall assume that, as men in daily life are accustomed to suffer from a sense of disproportion, it is this that is relieved or purged away by the laughter of comedy; for comedy (witness the comic mask) distorts proportions; its essence is the imitation of things seen out of proportion. By contemplating the disproportions of comedy, we are freed from the sense of disproportion in life, and regain our perspective, settling as it were into our proper selves. To Aristotle, the process of settling into our true selves is pleasure; that is his definition of pleasure.

We must again note the relation of suspense to catharsis. The use of suspense is common to tragedy and comedy. The tragic poet keys his audience up to a high state of tension by half-revealing, half-concealing, the final discovery and outcome of the story; when we are duly prepared, and yet not quite expecting the piteous revelation, all is suddenly made manifest, and we dissolve in tears. Such is the catharsis that takes place in the theatre — an effect that probably must be differentiated from the emotional state of the audience when it has left the theatre and is dispersed. So also in comedy there may be a critical point toward which the poet conducts his audience by artistic steps; there will be a main disclosure that is most directly concerned with the relief of comic suspense — with the comic catharsis. But whereas in pure tragedy the spectator (who indeed fears from the beginning) does not weep throughout the play, but only after the revelation, in pure comedy he laughs from the outset.

The catharsis is effected by a series of explosions, doubtless culminating in one final laugh when the situation is cleared; that is, if the plot is 'involved.' As for the after-effect of comedy, it may not be wholly different from that of tragedy: an elevated calm, or tranquillity of soul, with clear mental perspective and freedom from disturbing emotion. Probably the arousal and relief of emotion of any one sort would tend to free the soul from harmful emotion in general.

If Aristotle regarded the latent tendency in man either to dangerous inhibitions and repressions, or to an undue laxity of expression, as harmful, certain licenses of comedy — for example, in Aristophanes — might readily accord with his homeopathic view as to the curative value of artistic representation or externalization. Thus the elements in comedy that derive from the phallic procession might be defended upon the ground that they furnished a catharsis of the mental disturbances associated with such stimuli in life.]

From the definition of comedy we proceed to analyze the elements in a comedy that demand the attention of the poet. Since there are *dramatis personae* who produce the author's imitation of an action, it necessarily follows that (1) everything pertaining to the appearance of actors on the stage — including costume, scenery, and the like — will constitute an element in the technique of comedy; and that (2) the composition of the music, and (3) the composition in words, will constitute two further elements, since the music and diction comprise the medium in which the action is imitated. By diction is meant the fitting together of the words in metre; as for the musical element, the meaning is too obvious to call for explanation.

But, furthermore, the original object of the imitation is an action of men. In the comedy, then, the imitation, which is also an action, must be carried on by agents, the *dramatis personae*. And these agents

The six constituent elements [of comedy] which demand attention from the poet

1. Spectacle

2. Music

3. Diction:
composition
in metre

must necessarily be endowed by the poet with certain distinctive characteristics both of (4) moral bent (*ethos*) and (5) intellect (*dianoia*); since it is from a man's moral bent, and from the way in which he reasons, that we are led to ascribe goodness or badness, success or failure, to his acts. Thus, as there are two natural causes, moral bent and thought, of the particular deeds of men, so there are the same two natural causes of their success or failure in life. And the comic poet must take cognizance of this.

4. *Ethos*5. *Dianoia*

Finally, the action which the poet imitates is represented in the comedy by (6) the plot or fable. And, according to our present distinction, plot means that synthesis of the particular incidents which gives form or being to the comedy as a whole; whereas moral bent (*ethos*) is that which leads us to characterize the agents as worse or better; and intellect (thought, or *dianoia*) is that which is shown in all their utterances — in arguing special points, or in avouching some general truth.

6. Plot

In every comedy, therefore, there are six constitutive (or formative) elements, according to the quality of which we judge the excellence of the work as a whole: plot, moral bent, intellect, diction, the musical element, and spectacle. Two of them, the musical element and diction, concern the medium of imitation; one, spectacle, the manner; and three, plot, moral bent, and intellect, the objects. There can be no other elements. Of these constitutive elements, accordingly, the judicious comic poet will make due use; for every drama must contain certain things that are meant for the eye, as well as the elements of plot, moral bent, intellect, diction, and music.

Summary of
the six ele-
ments

The most important element (in comedy) is the structure of the whole

The moral bent of the agents is subsidiary to what is done

The most important of the constitutive elements is the plot, that is, the organization of the incidents of the story; for comedy in its essence is an imitation, not of men as such, but of action and of life. Consequently in a play the agents do not do thus and so for the sake of revealing their moral dispositions; rather, the display of character is included as subsidiary to the things that are done. So that the incidents of the action, and the structural ordering of these incidents, constitute the end and aim of the comedy. [That is, the structure of the comedy as a whole, the 'form' of it, is equivalent to the main effect upon the audience.] Here, as in everything else that we know of, the final purpose is the main thing. We may see the importance of this element from the fact that, whereas without action a comedy could not exist, it is possible to construct a comedy in which the agents have no distinctive moral bent.

Again, one may string together a series of speeches in which the moral bent of the agents is delineated in excellent verse and diction, and yet fail to produce the effect of comedy. One is more likely to produce the effect with a comedy, however deficient in these respects, if it has a plot — that is, an artistic ordering of the incidents. In addition to all this, the most vital features of comedy, by which the interest and emotions of the audience are most effectively stirred — that is, discoveries, and reversals of fortune — are parts of the plot or action. It is significant, too, that beginners in the art become proficient in versification, and in the delineation of personal traits, before they are able to combine the incidents of the action into an effective whole.

Form is soul

(1) The plot, then, is the first principle, and as it were the very soul, of comedy.

(2) And the characters of the agents come next in order of importance. — There is a parallel in the art of painting : the most striking colors laid on with no order will not be so effective as the simplest caricature done in outline. — Comedy is the imitation of an action : mainly on this account does it become, in the second place, an imitation of personal agents.

Elements in
the order of
importance

1. Plot
2. *Ethos*

(3) Third in importance comes the element of intellect, the faculty in the agent of saying what can be said, or what is fitting to be said, for the ends of comedy, in a given situation. It is that element in a comedy which is supplied by the study of politics, rhetoric, [and sophistical arguments]. This intellectual element must be clearly distinguished from the ethical element (moral bent) in the drama, for the latter includes only such things as reveal the moral bias of the agents — their tendency to choose or to avoid a certain line of action, in cases where the motive is not obvious. The intellectual element, on the other hand, is manifest in everything the poet makes the agents say to prove or disprove a special point, and in every utterance by way of generalization.

3. *Dianoia*

Ethos and
dianoia dif-
ferentiated by
their outward
manifestations

[The way in which the moral and intellectual elements unite in the speech and action of the agent is often imperfectly grasped by readers of Aristotle. Together, the two elements form the personality of the agent. In a sense, every utterance of a speaker in a comedy illustrates his moral bent, and likewise shows the workings of his intellect ; so that, like the other constitutive elements (save that music is intermittent), these two enter into every part of a play. The constitutive elements might, in fact, be compared to the various kinds of tissue in a living organism, all being found in any part. Thus in the *Frogs* of Aristophanes the decision of Dionysus to visit the underworld in search of Euripides is shown in a succession of speeches

in which he argues the necessity of his quest, uttering a mixture of general statements and particular inferences ; his bent and his thinking are displayed together ; and the plot begins with his decision. Commonly, of course, the decision to choose or avoid a line of action is first emphasized, and then the arguing proceeds ; but, as in life, both elements run continuously throughout the play — just as the plot runs through the play, being in the narrower sense like the bony framework of a living animal, but in a more inclusive sense the governing idea of the whole, which comprehends every detail. So, obviously, the element of diction runs throughout the play ; plot, moral bent, and intellect being imitated in this medium.]

4. Diction

(4) Next in importance among the constituents comes the diction. This, as has been explained, means the interpretation of the sentiments of the agents in the form of language ; it is essentially the same whether the language is metrical or not.

5. Musical composition

(5) Of the two elements remaining, the musical is the more important, since it furnishes the chief of the accessory pleasures in comedy.

6. Spectacle

(6) The element of spectacle, though stimulating, is last in importance, since it demands the lowest order of skill, and has least connection with the art of poetry as such. A comedy can produce its effect independently of a stage-performance and actors — that is, when it is read ; and besides, the preparation of the stage and the actors is the affair of the stage-manager rather than the poet.

CHAPTER 7

Having thus distinguished the six constitutive elements, we are now to discuss, as the first and most important consideration in the art of comedy, the proper organization of the incidents into a plot that shall have the ideal comic effect. According to the

definition (p. 179), a comedy is an imitation of an action that is complete in itself, forming a whole of a sufficient magnitude or extent; for a thing may be a whole, and yet wanting in magnitude. [By magnitude Aristotle primarily means extent, which for a comedy could be measured by the number of lines in it; thus the *Birds* of Aristophanes, consisting of 1765 lines, is of somewhat greater extent than *Oedipus the King* of Sophocles, which contains 1530 lines. But if there is also involved in 'magnitude' the idea of the seriousness and importance of the action, of the greatness and significance of a heroic tale, then in this sense the conception needs to be specially interpreted for comedy. The plot of the *Birds*, being ludicrous, can not precisely be great in itself, but is a travesty of a great theme, namely, the founding of a State. Such a theme when more seriously treated has greatness, as in the *Republic* of Plato or the *Aeneid* of Virgil. Thus considered, the plot in each of the comedies of Aristophanes is a comic imitation of a great idea.]

The action [of a comedy] must be a complete whole, of adequate extent

Similarly, what comes next in Aristotle, on the law of necessary or probable sequence in the incidents of the drama, may need special interpretation when we shift from tragedy to comedy. It holds for the New Greek Comedy, as we see in the Latin adaptations by Plautus and Terence. And there is an underlying rationality of procedure in Aristophanes; but it is clear that the sequence of incidents in comedy must often run counter to the law of necessity and probability. Yet it is equally clear that the comic poet must keep in mind the law of a necessary or probable sequence, and must suggest it, in order to depart from it in the right way for the ends of comedy, showing that he observes the law by his method of violating it.]

A whole is that which has (1) a beginning, (2) a middle, and (3) an end.

Definitions: a whole

(1) A beginning (= x) is that which does not itself come after anything else in a necessary sequence, but

A beginning

after which some other thing ($= y$) does naturally exist or come to pass.

An end

(3) An end ($= z$), on the contrary, is that which naturally comes after something else ($= y$) in either a necessary or a usual sequence, but has nothing else following it.

A middle

(2) A middle ($= y$) is that which naturally comes after something else ($= x$), and is followed by a third thing ($= z$).

A well-constructed comic plot, therefore, can neither begin nor end where and when the poet happens to like. It must conform to the principles just enunciated.

Plot (in comedy) is like the structure of a living organism

And, further, as to magnitude : in order to be beautiful, a living organism, or any other individual thing made up of parts, must possess not only an orderly arrangement of those parts, but also a proper magnitude ; for beauty depends upon size and order. Beauty is impossible in an extremely minute creature, since we see the whole in an almost infinitesimal moment of time, and lose the pleasure arising from a distinct perception of order in the parts. Nor could a creature of vast dimensions be beautiful to us — an animal, say, 1,000 miles in length ; for in that case the eye could not take in the entire object at once — we should see the parts, but not the unity of the whole. In the same way, then, as an inanimate object made up of parts, or a living creature, must be of such a size that the parts and the whole may be easily taken in by the eye, just so must the plot of a comedy have a proper length, so that the parts and the whole may be easily embraced by the memory. The artificial limits, of course, as these are determined by the conditions of presentation on the stage, and by the power of attention in an audience, do not concern the art of poetry as such. The

To be beautiful it must have magnitude and order, yet not be too large

The natural limit

Artificial limits

artistic limit, set by the nature of the thing itself, is this: So long as the plot is perspicuous throughout, the greater the length of the story, the more beautiful will it be on account of its magnitude. But to define the matter in a general way, an adequate limit for the magnitude of the plot is this: Let the length be such as to allow a transition from better to worse fortune, or from worse to better, through a series of incidents linked together in a sequence based upon the law of probability or necessity.

**The artistic
limit**

**An adequate
limit**

The unity of a plot does not consist, as some suppose, in having one person as subject; for the number of things that befall the individual is endless, and some of them can not be reduced to unity. So, too, any one man performs many acts from which it is quite impossible to construct one unified action.

CHAPTER 8

**Unity of hero
is not
unity of plot**

[Aristotle goes on to speak of the faulty choice of subject made by poets who have written a *Heracleid*, a *Theseid*, and the like, and who suppose that, since Heracles or Theseus was a single person, the story of Heracles or Theseus must have unity. But here again we may say that while a comedy should be an organic whole, and while the comic poet must work with the law of unity of action before him, his special purpose might justify a mere pretence that the things his hero does or undergoes are strictly unified. That it is possible for the comic poet intentionally to violate the law may be seen in Byron's *Don Juan*, where, however, there is also much careless neglect of it. What Dionysus, masquerading as Heracles, suffers and does in the *Frogs* of Aristophanes constitutes a fairly unified action — a single descent of the hero into Hades for a definite purpose, with incidents thereto appertaining. That the law may hold as strictly in comedy as in tragedy may be seen in the *Plutus* of Aristophanes, and in Plautus, Terence, and Molière generally. Aristotle, indeed, illustrates the law by the *Odyssey*, which in his

**Examples of
the mistake**

opinion (see below, p. 201, and compare above, p. 175) has to some extent the nature of comedy.

That oneness of hero is not the same thing as unity of plot, either in comedy or tragedy, needs perhaps still further comment. The plot may be unified when there is no central figure in the play; see, for example, the *Trinummus* and the *Menaechmi* of Plautus, the *Comedy of Errors* of Shakespeare, and plays in which the chorus has a leading part. It has already been noted that the two 'unities' mentioned in the *Poetics* are the unity of action, upon which Aristotle insists, and the unity of hero, to which he attaches at most but a secondary importance. As we have seen, there is no allusion to any 'unity of place.' This, and the so-called 'unity of time,' are not Aristotelian. The discussion of them first appears in Italy during the Renaissance; and it was from Italian commentators on the *Poetics*, not from Aristotle, that French theorists and playwrights derived them.]

Homer did
not make it

Homer, whether through conscious art or native insight, evidently understood the correct method. Thus in composing a story of Odysseus, he did not make his plot include all that ever happened to Odysseus. For example, it befell this hero to receive a gash from a boar on Mount Parnassus; and it befell him also to feign madness at the time of the mustering against Ilium. But what he suffered in the former case, and what he did in the latter, are incidents between which there was no necessary or probable sequence. Instead of joining disconnected incidents like these, Homer took for the subject of the Odyssey an action with the kind of unity here described. Accordingly, as in the other imitative arts, so in poetry, the object of the imitation in each case is a unit; therefore in a comedy the plot, which is an imitation of an action, must represent an action which is organically unified, the order of the incidents being such that transposing or removing

Unity like
that of a
living body

any one of them will dislocate and disorganize the whole. Every part must be necessary and in its place, for a thing whose presence or absence makes no perceptible difference is not an organic part of the whole.

[The counsel of perfection just enunciated is warranted by the success of Sophocles in *Oedipus the King*, by that of Molière in *Tartuffe*, and, in the main, by that of Homer and Aristophanes. Yet almost any one of the minor contests between a Greek and a Trojan in the *Iliad* might be removed without disorganizing the whole story; and the same is true of minor incidents in the wanderings of Odysseus. So also in the *Birds* of Aristophanes, the best that may be said regarding the sequence of one or another incident of a minor sort, after the founding of the aerial city, is that the incident naturally arises from the general situation, and does not conflict with those that are in juxtaposition with it. See what is said of the episodic plot, below, p. 194.]

From what has been said, it is clear that the office of the poet consists in displaying, not what actually has happened, but what in a given situation might happen — a sequence of events that is possible in the sense of being either credible or inevitable. [For Aristophanic comedy, the stress clearly must be, not upon the probability of the story as a whole, but upon the 'probability' found in the relation of one incident to another. Given the initial assumption in the *Birds*, the sequence of events becomes 'probable' in the sense Aristotle chiefly has in mind; for he thinks of 'probability' less (as we commonly and vaguely do) with reference to things in general, and more with reference to specific antecedent and consequent within the limits of a particular play or tale.] In other words, the poet is not a historian; for the two differ, not in that one writes in metrical, and the other in non-metrical, language. For example, you might turn the amusing parts of Herodotus into verse, and you would still have a

CHAPTER 9

The [comic]
poet repre-
sents ideal
truth

He is not
a historian

Metre not the
essential
distinction

Poetry (in-
cluding com-
edy) more
philosophic
than history:
it is univer-
sal. History
deals with
the particular

Comedy has
become uni-
versal, rep-
resenting
the general
rather than
the particular

species of history, with metre no less than without it. The essential distinction lies in this, that the historian relates what has happened, and the poet what might happen — what is typical. Poetry is therefore something more philosophic and of greater significance than history; for poetry tends rather to express what is universal, whereas history relates particular events as such. By an exhibition of what is universal is meant the representation of what a certain type of person is likely or is bound to say or do in a given situation. This is the aim of the poet, who nevertheless attaches the names of specific persons to the types. As distinguished from the universal, the particular, which is the subject-matter of history, consists of what an actual person, Alcibiades or the like, actually did or underwent. **This** [that poetry represents general truth rather than particular fact] **has already become manifest in comedy; for the comic poets, having first combined the plot out of probable incidents** [incidents in a natural sequence], **supply the names that chance to fit the case, and do not, like the iambic** [lampooning] **poets, take as their subject the** [actual deeds and experiences of the] **individual** person. [It is assumed by certain scholars, among them Bywater, that Aristotle here draws a distinction between the Old Comedy, as represented by Aristophanes, and the New, as represented by Menander. But the assumption needs to be tested. Aristophanes was but recently dead when Aristotle was in the earlier stages of his education, and Menander was but twenty years old when Aristotle died — possibly ten years old when the *Poetics* took shape. If there be a sole direct reference in the work to any comedy of this time, it is 'probably to the *Orestes* of Alexis or some other comedy on the same subject' (Bywater, note on 1453^a36; cf. below, p. 201). It would seem, then, that the present reference might be to an inter-

mediate stage of comedy preceding Menander ; it would seem also that the allusion to the ' iambic poets ' might take us to a stage earlier than that of Aristophanes — certainly earlier than that of his *Plutus*. It is true that Aristophanes does make use of the names of Socrates, Euripides, Aeschylus, and other historical personages, though often, as in the case of Socrates, as representatives of a class. At all events he does not subject them to harsh invective, nor deal largely with the actual events of their lives, after the fashion of Archilochus (? for Aristotle *the* old ' iambic poet ') ; and he does not *begin* with them, and then form a plot. He begins with a plot of a general nature ; nor is it easy to see how, as the master of varied metrical and other effects in comedy, he could be labeled an ' iambic poet,' and included among primitives. The employment of agents bearing historical names as the chief personages in comedy is rare with Aristophanes, his reference to actual persons, frequent as it is in some of his plays, being mainly incidental to momentary comic purposes. For the most part, his chief agents are fictitious personages, whose names — as Peisthetæus, Euelpides, Dicaeopolis (' Talkover,' ' Hopeful,' ' Mr. Civic-Justice ') — might be said in Aristotelian parlance to have been devised after the plot and for the sake of it, and not the plot for them ; the *Plutus* of Aristophanes would illustrate the point of Aristotle quite as well as any play from the New Comedy of Greece or from Plautus and Terence.]

From all this it is evident that the comic poet (*poet* = ' maker ') is a maker of plots more than a maker of verses, inasmuch as he is a poet by virtue of imitating some object, and the object he imitates is an action. And even if he happens to take a subject from what actually has happened, he is none the less a poet for that ; since there is nothing to hinder certain actual events from possessing a comic sequence governed by the law of probability or necessity ; and it is by virtue of representing the quality in such events that he is

The [comic] poet is a ' maker ' of plots

Universality sometimes found in actual events

their poet. [Thus, for the series of contests in the *Frogs*, ending in the dramatic contest between Euripides and Aeschylus, Aristophanes takes the sequence of events at the City Dionysia, generalizing it for comic purposes.]

Purely episodic [comic] plots are the worst

Of imperfect plots and actions the episodic are the worst, a plot being called 'episodic' when there is no observance of probability or necessity in the sequence of incident. Inferior poets construct this kind of plot through their own fault; good poets, in order to meet the requirements of the actors. Since his work must be presented on the stage, and occupy a certain length of time, a good poet will often stretch out the plot beyond its natural capacity, and by the insertion of unnecessary matter will be forced to distort the sequence of incident. [The comic poet might reckon with the principle by not introducing the irrelevant without an air of relevancy. Otherwise we have the fault illustrated by the insertion of Polichinelle and his adventures in *Le Malade Imaginaire* of Molière.]

The emotions [of comedy] are aroused by an unexpected outcome in a causal sequence

But to proceed with the parts of the definition of comedy. Comedy is an imitation, not only of a complete action, but of incidents that arouse pleasure and laughter; and such incidents affect us most when we are not expecting them, if at same time they are caused, or have an air of being caused, by one another; for we are struck with more amusement if we find a causal relation in unexpected comic occurrences than if they come about of themselves and in no special sequence; since even pure coincidences seem most amusing if there is something that looks like design in them. Plots therefore that illustrate the principle of necessity or probability in the sequence of incident are better than others.

But comic plots are either uninvolved or involved, since the actions which are imitated in the plots may readily be divided into the same two classes. Now we may call an action uninvolved when the incidents follow one another in a single continuous movement; that is, when the change of fortune comes about without a reversal of situation and without a discovery. [Such a plot is represented in the main action of the *Birds* of Aristophanes — though there are incidental recognitions or discoveries, and temporary dangers threatening a reversal in the fortunes of the hero.] An involved action is one in which the change of fortune is attended by a discovery or a reversal, or by both together. And each of these two incidents should arise from the structure of the plot itself; that is, each should be [or there should be a comic pretence that it is] the necessary or probable result of the incidents that have gone before, and should not merely follow them in point of time — for in the sequence of events there is a vast difference between *post hoc* and *propter hoc*.

CHAPTER 10

Uninvolved
and involved
[comic] plotsUninvolved
actionInvolved
action

A reversal of situation is a change in some part of the action from one state of affairs to its precise opposite — as has been said, from better fortune to worse, or from worse to better; and a change that takes place in the manner just described, namely, with reference to the law of probable or necessary sequence. [To illustrate: in the *Frogs* of Aristophanes the god Dionysus visits Hades for the purpose of bringing back the tragic poet Euripides to Athens, but after discovering the greater weight of the verse of Aeschylus, and his superior political sentiments, brings back the latter poet instead. A reversal may constitute the main turning-point in a comedy, as in the instance just noted, or as in Molière's *Tartuffe*, where the discovery of the impostor (4. 7) is attended by a reversal of his fortunes

CHAPTER 11

Reversal of
fortuneFrom better
to worse

(5. 7) ; or it may be subsidiary, as earlier in the *Frogs*, where we have an extended episode of discovery concerning the identity of Dionysus, involving him in temporary comic misfortune.]

Or from worse
to better

There is also the opposite change, from worse fortune to better. [So the discovery of the regal nature of the Hoopoe by Peisthetaerus, and of the anti-dicast Peisthetaerus by the Hoopoe, in the *Birds* of Aristophanes, is attended by a change to better fortune for both. With the discovery at the end of the *Frogs* comes worse fortune for Euripides, and better for Aeschylus. — But the worse fortune of comedy is not painful.]

Discovery or
recognition

A discovery, as the word itself indicates, is a transition from ignorance to knowledge, resulting either in friendship or in enmity on the part of those agents who are designed for better or worse fortune. The most artistic form of discovery is one attended by a reversal of fortune — [such a reversal as attends the mutual recognition of Peisthetaerus and the Hoopoe in the *Birds*]. There are, of course, other kinds of discovery besides that of the identity of persons ; a transition from ignorance to knowledge may come about

Discovery of
things

with reference to inanimate, even casual, things. [The discovery of an inanimate thing may be illustrated in the finding of Euclio's pot of money by Strobilus in the *Aulularia* of Plautus, or the finding of Harpagon's cash-box by La Flèche in Molière's *L'Avarc* ; and the discovery of something casual is seen in the recognition by various persons in *Hades* of the lion-skin and club of Heracles borne by Dionysus in the *Frogs* of Aristophanes.] It is also possible to discover whether some

Discovery of
deeds

person has done, or not done, a particular deed. [For example, in the *Frogs*, whether it was the god, or his slave Xanthias, who had, as Heracles, harried the underworld ; the disclosure that Asclepius and his servants had restored the sight of Plutus, god of wealth, in the *Plutus* of Aristophanes, is another instance.]

But the discovery bringing friendship or enmity, and the reversal bringing success or failure, will most effectively occasion the pleasure and laughter which it is the function of comedy to arouse. Furthermore, this kind of discovery will be instrumental in bringing about the happy ending of the action as a whole. Now since, in this case, the discovery means a recognition of persons, rather than of objects or deeds, there are two possibilities: (1) X may learn the identity of Y, when Y already knows the identity of X; or (2) X and Y may each have to learn the identity of the other. [Thus, at the opening of Aristophanes' *Plutus*, Chremylus must learn the identity of the blind god, while in Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors* Antipholus of Ephesus and Antipholus of Syracuse must each learn the identity of the other.]

The best kind
of discovery

Two possibilities in the
discovery of
persons

Two parts of the plot, then, reversal and discovery, represent these things in the action, and have been sufficiently explained. A third part would be the comic incident. This might be defined as an occurrence of a specially ludicrous or joyful sort. [Such would be harmless beatings or losses, gains and successful devices, victories in contests, marriages, feasts, and the like. The comic incident would be the parallel to Aristotle's third part, 'suffering' (*pathos*), in the tragic plot. — We naturally think of the main reversal, or discovery, or comic incident, as *the* reversal, or discovery, or comic incident in the play; but in so doing we may fail to grasp the analytical method of Aristotle. The fact is, wherever we find one of these, whether of major or minor significance, there we have one of the three elements of plot. Aristotle notes, for example, that the *Odyssey* is full of discoveries. Compare what is said above (pp. 185–6) of moral bent and intellect and their occurrence throughout a play. The comic incident may be illustrated by the alternate beatings given by Aeacus to Xanthias and Dionysus in the *Frogs*, the

Parts of the
plot

1. Reversal
2. Discovery
3. [The comic incident]

restoration of sight to the god of wealth in the *Plutus*, the regaining of his youth by Demus in the *Knights*, the feast at the end of the *Frogs*, loss and gain of treasure in Plautus (in the *Trinummus* and *Aulularia*) and Molière (in *L'Avare*), and the marriages with which most of the comedies of Aristophanes, and indeed comedies in general, end. The chief comic incident of an Aristophanic play may be the contest or agon; for example, perhaps, the dramatic contest between Aeschylus and Euripides in the *Frogs*.]

CHAPTER 12

Formative
elements
[of comedy]

Quantitative
parts [of
comedy]

Mention having been made of the six formative ['constitutive' or 'qualitative'] elements of comedy, we now come to the division of comedy into its quantitative elements—the separate sections into which a play is divided. [In a modern comedy the quantitative parts are simply the acts, or acts and scenes, the division into five acts being earlier than the Renaissance, certainly as early as Varro, probably discoverable in Plautus, and doubtless as old as Menander. As comedy (or tragedy) may be resolved by analysis into constituent elements comparable to the formative tissues of an organism, so it may be divided quantitatively, as we may divide an organism at the junction of the visible parts—as one might divide a creature of five segments into five. As for the quantitative parts in Aristophanes (compare above, pp. 56–9), his comedy has the following divisions: prologue, parode, agon, parabasis, episode, choricon, and exode. Five of these are found also in Greek tragedy: prologue, parode, episode, choricon, and exode. The prologue is that entire part of the comedy from the beginning to the parode of the chorus; the parode is the first whole statement of the chorus; the choricon, sung by the chorus, corresponds to the stasimon of tragedy; in Aristophanes, the exode, with which the comedy ends, can not be precisely equated with the exode of tragedy. In addition, there are two parts of comedy which are not found in tragedy: parabasis and agon. The parabasis is ordinarily placed in the middle of the comedy;

if complete, and if we regard the *pnigos* as a separate subdivision (see above, p. 57), the parabasis comprises seven subdivisions: the *commation*, the parabasis proper, the *pnigos*, the ode, the *epirrhema*, the *antode*, the *antepirrhema*. The *agon* or debate is an argument in which two persons contend for the mastery; one of the contestants may be the chorus, as in the *Birds* of Aristophanes. When complete, the *agon* consists of nine parts, the second four of these being paired with the first four: ode, *cataceleusmos*, *epirrhema*, *pnigos*, *antode*, *anticatacelusmos*, *antepirrhema*, *anti-pnigos*, *sphragis*. One may add the following from J. W. White, p. 21: 'Another division which, like the parabasis and the debate, is wholly peculiar to comedy is the *syzygy*, thus named because it consists regularly of four balanced parts, a song and a spoken part united with a second song and a second spoken part. A *syzygy* may occur in either half of the play. The action of the play is at a standstill during the debate and the parabasis, and a division, called scene, was gradually developed, the purpose of which was chiefly to adjust these larger divisions to the action. It is normally a spoken part, and generally occurs . . . in the first half of the play. The action of the second half of the play is carried forward mainly in a division consisting of episode and *stasimon*, which in their form and function resemble the corresponding parts of tragedy.']

Such, then, are the parts into which comedy is divided quantitatively, or according to its sections. The parts which are to be employed as formative elements have already been mentioned.

After what has been said above (esp. pp. 195–8), we must next discuss the following points: (1) What is the comic poet to aim at, and what is he to avoid, in the construction of his plots? In other words, (2) what are the specific sources of comic effect?

In the perfect comedy, as we have seen, the synthesis of the incidents must be, not uninvolved, but involved,

CHAPTER 13

The ideal structure [for the function of comedy]

Forms of plot
to be avoided

and this synthesis must be imitative of occurrences that arouse pleasure and laughter — for therein lies the distinctive function of this kind of imitation. Good and just men are not to be represented as ultimately unfortunate, for this is not ludicrous, but painful. Nor must evil men be represented as ultimately successful; nor, again, may an excessively wicked man be represented as falling from prosperity into misfortune. These situations are neither ludicrous nor pleasing, for laughter is aroused by a defect or disproportion which is not painful, and we are pleased at observing the success of one like ourselves. But an excessively wicked man deserves misery in proportion, and since his wickedness exceeds the average, he is not like one of ourselves. There remains, then, the case of the man

The preferable
situation

intermediate between these extremes: a man not excessively bad and unjust, nor yet one whose career is marked by virtue and prudence, but one whose actions become ridiculous through some ordinary shortcoming or foible — one from the number of everyday citizens, such as Peisthetaerus, Chremylus, Dicaeopolis, and men of that sort. To be perfectly comic, accordingly, the plot must not have a double issue, fortunate for the better, unfortunate for the worse. And the change of fortune must be, not a fall from happiness to misfortune, but a transition from ill success to good. And the action must come about, not through great excellence or depravity of character, but through some ludicrous defect or shortcoming in conduct, in a person either no better than the average of mankind, or rather worse than that. [To the foregoing one should perhaps add, as possibly Aristotelian, the analysis of Cicero (see above, p. 88): 'Neither an eminent or flagitious villain nor a wretch remarkably harassed with misfortunes is the proper subject of ridicule. . . . And

The single
happy issue
is best

the objects that are most easily played upon are those that deserve neither great detestation nor the greatest compassion. Hence it happens that the whole subject of the ridiculous lies in the moral vices of men who are neither beloved nor miserable, nor deserving to be dragged to punishment for their crimes.']

Second in excellence comes the form of construction where the thread is double, and there is a happy and an unhappy ending for the better and the worse agents respectively. Such is the outcome in the *Odyssey*. **The pleasure arising from this double structure is not the distinctive pleasure of tragedy; it is rather one that belongs to comedy, where the deadliest of legendary foes, like Orestes and Aegisthus, become friends, and quit the stage without any one slaying or being slain.**

As in a comedy dealing with Orestes and Aegisthus

The effect of comedy may be produced by means that appertain simply to presentation on the stage [as by the costumes, partly beautiful, partly ludicrous, in the *Birds* of Aristophanes]. But it may also arise from the structure and incidents of the comedy, which is the preferable way, and is the mark of a better poet [—and such really is the case with the *Birds*]; for the plot should be so constructed that, even without help from the eye, one who simply hears the story must thrill with pleasure, and be moved to laughter, at what occurs. In fact, these are just the emotions one would feel in listening to the story of the *Birds* off the stage. To bring about the comic effect by spectacular means is less a matter of the poetic art, and depends upon adventitious aid. But those who employ the means of the stage to produce what is grotesque, without being ludicrous, are absolute strangers to the art of comedy; for not every kind of pleasure is to be sought from a comedy, but only that specific pleasure which is characteristic of this art.

CHAPTER 14

[Comic] effect through spectacular means is less artistic

The effect should arise from the action, and is psycho-physiological

Since the pleasure which is characteristic of comedy comes from the arousal of laughter, and since the poet must produce this pleasure through an imitation of some action, it is clear that the comic quality must be impressed upon the incidents that make up the story. Let us consider, then, what kinds of occurrence strike us as ludicrous. [For this topic, see perhaps the *Tractatus Coislinianus*, below, pp. 225, 229–59; according to that, however, comic effect would seem to arise in possibly equal measure from the occurrences represented, and from the diction.]

CHAPTER 15

The *ethos* of
the agents

It must be
[inferior]

[The comic
poet must
keep in
mind] the
principle
of truth to type

The principle
of truth to
life

We turn to the moral dispositions of the agents. In respect to these, there are four things for the poet to aim at. First of all, (1) the agents must not be good. The ethical element will be present if, as already mentioned (pp. 183, 185), by speech or act the agents manifest a certain moral bent in what they choose to do or avoid; and the *ethos* will be inferior if the habit of choice is so. [‘Good’ means good in its kind, performing its function, good for something; and inferiority will mean falling short of this.] Such inferiority is possible in all types of humanity, not merely in a woman or a slave — woman being perhaps an inferior type, and the slave quite worthless — [but also in a citizen or a traditional hero.] Secondly, (2) the comic poet in representing the agents must keep in mind the law of truth to type. There is, for example, a type of manly valor and eloquence; [and the poet would have this type in mind when representing such a personage as Dionysus in the *Frogs* of Aristophanes; nor for comedy would it be inappropriate to represent a woman as valorous in this way, or as masterly in argument — as in the *Lysistrata*.] Thirdly, (3) there is the principle of truth to life, which is different from the principle of common inferiority, or from that of truth to type. Fourthly, (4) the comic poet must keep in mind the

principle of consistency in the *ethos*. [If the characters are not true to their nature as first presented, their inconsistency must not be accidental. Departures from the norm must not be made without suggesting the norm. The chorus in the *Acharnians* is ludicrously inconsistent.]

The principle
of consistency

As in combining the incidents of the plot, so also in representing the agents, the comic poet must bear in mind the principle of a necessary or probable relation between one thing and another. That is, a certain kind of person must speak or act in a certain fashion as the necessary or probable outcome of his inward nature; [or, if not, still the deviations must be made with an eye to the principle.] Even in comedy it is desirable that the solution of dramatic situations should come to pass through the progress of the story itself; [though the use of a mechanical device like the *deus ex machina* is permissible if the effect of the device in itself is comic].

The inner
man and the
succession of
his words and
acts

Natural se-
quence rather
than mechan-
ical artifice

Since comedy is an imitation of men worse than the average, it is necessary for the comic poet to observe the method of successful caricaturists; for they reproduce the distinctive features of the original, and yet, while preserving the likeness of a man, render him ludicrous and distorted — though not painfully so — in the picture. So, too, the comic poet, in imitating men of the common sort, must represent them as such, and yet as ambitious, irascible, or faulty in some other way; [but not painfully so — men like Peisthetaerus and Dicaeopolis in the *Birds* and the *Acharnians* of Aristophanes].

The [comic]
poet must de-
pict flaws of
character, and
yet preserve
average mora-
lity

These principles the comic poet must constantly bear in mind, and, in addition, such principles of stage-effect as necessarily concern the art of poetry [as distinct from the technique of the costumer, or the like]; since

The [comic]
poet must
give due
attention to
stage-effect

here also mistakes can often be made. But on this head enough has already been said in a work already published. [The reference may be to a lost dialogue of Aristotle *On Poets*.]

CHAPTER 16

**Discovery :
six species****1. By marks
or tokens**

The general nature of discovery has been explained above (pp. 196–7). We may now examine the several species. The first, and [for tragedy] the least artistic, kind of discovery is recognition by marks or tokens, which may be either congenital or acquired after birth — whether bodily marks, as scars, or external tokens. [Such would be the club and lion-skin of Heracles borne by Dionysus in the *Frogs*. The objection to such means of discovery on the ground that they are arbitrary and mechanical (not logical and directed at the faculty of reason), which holds for tragedy, does not hold in the same way for comedy, since here the arbitrary or mechanical device may be employed, as such, for a comic purpose. However, they may be used in a better or a worse fashion, since it is better that they should appear in the natural course of events, as in the case mentioned in the *Frogs*.]

**2. Arbitrary
discoveries
other than by
tokens**

The second kind are discoveries arbitrarily introduced by the poet [that is, again not growing out of the sequence of events], and for that reason less artistic. [An example is the arbitrary disclosure respecting Aeschylus and Euripides in the *Frogs* 758; another, the arbitrary recognition of Iris in the *Birds* 1204 (but here a joke is involved in the method).]

**3. Discovery
through
memories**

The third kind is discovery through memory, when the inward man, stirred by hearing or seeing something familiar, is led to display his feelings. [And so his identity is revealed. One of the two examples given in the *Poetics* is that of Odysseus at the Court of Alcinoüs. When Odysseus hears the minstrel chant the adventure of the Wooden Horse, he is reminded of the past, and his weeping leads to the disclosure of his identity. In the Biblical story of Joseph, the hero

weeps at the sight of his brother Benjamin, but retires to hide his emotion, so that the discovery at this point is merely suggested, to be effected later in another way. In pure comedy, the laughter of X at the recital of an episode in which he had taken a leading part could be used to effect his recognition by Y.]

The fourth kind is discovery by a process of reasoning. [Thus the identity of the twins Antipholus of Ephesus and Antipholus of Syracuse, and of their twin slaves, is made clear to the Duke, in Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*, Act 5, by a process of reasoning.]

4. Discovery
by inference

Allied to this is (fifth) discovery by false inference, where the poet causes X to be recognized by Y through the false inference of Y [whether through an unintentional fallacy on either side, or through a logical deception practised upon one by the other. (See Appendix, below, pp. 290–305.)]

5. Fancied
discovery
through
sophistical
deception

But of all discoveries, the best is the kind that grows out of the very nature of the incidents, when an amusing revelation comes about from suitable antecedents [as in the recognition of the God of Wealth by Chremylus in the *Plutus* of Aristophanes. — So also the discovery of Tartuffe as an impostor, by Orgon, in Molière]. The next best are those that come about through a process of reasoning, [or through false inference, well handled by the comic poet].

6. The best
form of dis-
covery grows
out of the
action itself

When actually composing his comedies, and working out the plots in the diction, the poet should endeavor to the utmost to visualize what he is representing. In this way, seeing everything with all possible vividness as if he were a spectator of the incidents he is portraying, he will devise what is fitting for comedy, and run the least danger of overlooking unintended inconsistencies. [See below, pp. 244–9, 257–9.]

CHAPTER 17

Practical
hints for
the work of
composing
[comedies]

How to avoid
[unintentional]
incongruities
in the action

As far as possible, the comic poet should also assume the very attitudes and gestures appropriate to the

How to succeed in delineating [comic] characters and their feelings

Two kinds of [comic] poets

First, one must make an outline sketch of the whole [comedy]

Then fill in the episodes

agents; for, of authors with the same natural ability, they will be most effective who themselves experience the feelings they represent. The poet who himself feels the impulses to irony or garrulity will represent irony or garrulity in the most lifelike fashion. Hence the art of comedy requires either a certain natural plasticity in the poet, or a personal tendency to be ironical or the like. Poets of the first sort readily assume one comic personality after another; those of the second naturally pass into intensified modes of their own habitual reactions. [One might instance Aristophanes, Shakespeare, and Molière as comic poets of the plastic sort, Plautus and Swift as possessed of a comic bias.]

As for the plot, whether it be his own invention or a traditional story, the comic poet should first make a reduced sketch of the whole, generalizing it, and then fill in and expand this by developing the episodes. How one may take a generalized view of the plot may be illustrated from [the *Frogs* of Aristophanes,] the plan of which is this: [A certain god who presides over comedy as well as tragedy, perceiving that a city is by their death bereft of all its superior tragic poets, decides to visit the underworld to bring one back to life. With a servant he consults a hero, victor in many contests, and, disguised as this hero, after various struggles, arrives at his destination, to find that a contest has been instituted between the poet he seeks and a rival tragic poet. As judge of the contest the god decides in favor of the rival poet, and with a reversal of intention brings him back to earth.]

When the general outline has been determined, and fitting names have been supplied for the agents, the next thing is to elaborate the episodes. Now care must be taken that the episodes are suited to the comic action and the comic agents. [In the *Frogs*, for example, the contest between Dionysus and the 'frog-

swans ' is an appropriate episode, since it comes in the natural order of events, since it is a prelude to the contest between the tragic poets, and since the whole play is an imitation of a Dionysiac competition in music and drama ; and the encounter of Dionysus and Xanthias with Aeacus is likewise appropriate, since it is in keeping with the tradition of Heracles, and leads to the discovery of the contest between Euripides and Aeschylus. And this contest is likewise an appropriate episode.] The episodes must also be of an appropriate length. In comic dramas they are short ; in a comic narrative it is they that serve to extend the work. [The main plan of Fielding's *Tom Jones*, for example, is not long : A certain foundling is through guile estranged from his benefactor, and driven from his home and his love, and is secretly dogged by his rival. After many adventures he is imprisoned, a conspiracy having meanwhile been formed to marry his love to his rival. At length he is released, and his real identity disclosed, the outcome being that he is restored to his home and united to his love, and his rival banished. This is the essential argument of the story ; all the rest is in the nature of episode.]

Every comedy consists of (1) a complication, and (2) an unraveling. The incidents lying outside the action proper, and often certain of the incidents within it, form the complication ; the rest of the play constitutes the unraveling. More specifically, by complication is meant everything from the beginning up to that incident, the last in a series, out of which comes the change of fortune ; by unraveling or *dénouement*, everything from the change of fortune to the end of the play. [In the *Frogs*, the complication embraces everything up to the weighing of the lines of the two poets, and the *dénouement* everything from that point to the end. In the *Plutus*, the complication includes everything up to the restoration of sight in the God of Wealth, and the *dénouement* consists of the remainder of the play.]

CHAPTER 18

Complication
and *dénouement*

Four species
[of comedy]
according to
sources of
[comic] effect

[Comedy] of
plot

[Of ludicrous
incident]

Of character

Of spectacle

Unfair de-
mands of
criticism

The fair
basis of
comparison is
mastery of
plot

The [comic]
poet must
not fail
in the un-
raveling

A multiple
story is to
be avoided
[in comedy]

Four different parts of the play have been discussed as factors in comic effect, namely: reversal and discovery; [the comic incident]; moral bent, or character, in the agents; and spectacular means. Corresponding to the relative prominence of one or another of these factors in a play, there are four species of comedy: (1) The involved, where the whole play is a recognition with change of fortune. [This is substantially the case in the *Plutus* of Aristophanes, the *Tartuffe* of Molière, and Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*.] (2) The comedy of ludicrous incident; [for example, the *Frogs* of Aristophanes.] (3) The comedy in which the nature of the agents is paramount; [for example, the *Misanthrope* of Molière]. Then (4) there is a fourth kind in which the spectacular element is very important, [as in the *Birds* of Aristophanes, and Rostand's *Chantecler*]. But the poet should do his best to combine every element of comic effect, or, failing that, the more important ones, and the major part of them. The effort is very necessary in a time of unfair criticism. Since in previous times there have been authors who were successful, one in the use of one source of effect, another in the use of another, critics expect a new poet to surpass them all in their several lines of excellence. But in comparing one comedy with another, the fairest way is to begin with the plots as a basis of criticism; and this amounts to a comparison of complication with complication, and of *dénouement* with *dénouement*. Many authors succeed in the complication, and then fail in the unraveling. But the comic poet must show mastery of construction in both.

The poet must likewise remember not to employ a multiple story, like that of a mock-epic, for the subject of a comedy. In the mock-epic, owing to its scale,

every part assumes its proper length ; but when the entire scheme is reduced to the scale of a drama, the result is unsatisfactory. [Thus Molière properly takes but a part of the legend of *Don Juan* for the subject of his comedy ; and again, following Plautus, in *Amphitryon* he dramatizes but a part of the story of Heracles.]

The comic chorus should be regarded as belonging to the *dramatis personae* ; it should be an integral part of the whole, and take its share in the action. [The model is the practice of Aristophanes ; for example, his use of the chorus in the *Birds*, the *Acharnians*, and *Lysistrata*.] In certain later comedies the songs have no more connection with the plot than with that of any other play ; the chorus sing mere interludes. [This seems to have been true of plays by Menander. A modern instance is the intercalated choral matter of the *Second Intermède* in *Le Malade Imaginaire*. The *Troisième Intermède* is more directly related to the substance of the play. In the *Avertissement* to *Les Facheux* Molière apologizes for certain places where the ballet functions less naturally.] And yet, what real difference is there between introducing a song that is foreign to the action and attempting to fit a speech, (or a whole episode,¹) from one drama into another ?

The [comic] poet must treat the chorus as among the agents proper

The other formative elements of comedy having now been discussed, it remains to speak of diction and intellect. As for the intellectual element, we may assume what has been said in the Aristotelian treatise on Rhetoric, to which inquiry the topic more properly belongs. [For comedy the poet needs an understanding of rhetorical principles and practice, since he must sometimes positively observe them, and sometimes (as in representing garrulity or nonsense) knowingly depart from them.] The intellectual element includes every-

CHAPTER 19

On *dianoia*
consult Aristotle's *Rhetoric*

¹ The expression in parentheses is probably an interpolation in the text of the *Poetics* ; see Gudeman, *Philologus* 76. 258-9.

Proof and
refutation

The arousal
of emotion
Magnifying
and minify-
ing [in com-
edy]

The [comic]
poet's use
of *dianoia* in
what the
agent says or
does

thing that is to be effected by the language of the agents — in their efforts to prove and to refute, to arouse one another's emotions, such as love, or cupidity, or anger, or the like, and to exaggerate or diminish the importance of things. [See, for example, the speeches of proof and refutation employed by Chremylus and Poverty in discussing the advantages and disadvantages of a redistribution of wealth, in the *Plutus* of Aristophanes; the efforts of the chorus to augment the emulation of Euripides and Aeschylus in the *Frogs*; and the processes of magnifying and minifying, in the same play, which the two poets make use of in estimating, each of them, his own tragedies and those of his rival.]

It is evident, too, that the same underlying forms of thought must be in operation whenever the comic poet makes the agents try by their *acts* to arouse emotion in one another, or to give these acts an air of importance or naturalness. [An example would be the alternate blows inflicted by Aeacus upon Dionysus and Xanthias, in the *Frogs*, with a view to eliciting a cry of pain from the one who is not a god, and the efforts of the victims to make their reactions seem natural or unimportant.] The only difference is that with the act the impression has to be made without explanation; whereas with the spoken word it has to be made by the speaker, and result from his language; for what would be the function of the speaker if things appeared in the desired light quite apart from anything that might be said? [In the example just given, the explanations of Xanthias and Dionysus supplement their actions.]

Diction

Under the head of diction, one subject for inquiry is the modes of spoken utterance — the difference between command and entreaty, declaration and threat, question and answer, and the like. Such distinctions, however, concern, not the poet, but the interpreter,

Remote con-
siderations

and the student of elocution. Whether the poet knows these things or not, they do not directly concern his art, nor do they offer a basis for criticizing him.

The diction proper, taken as a whole, is made up of the following parts. [The list begins with the smallest elements, and proceeds synthetically to the largest composite factors of discourse—running from the indivisible sound and the syllable to the entire poem regarded as a continuous and unified utterance.]

(1) The ultimate element (virtually letter); (2) the primary combination of ultimate elements (not quite a 'syllable'); (3) the connective particle; (4) the separative particle; (5) the noun (or name-word, including adjectives as well as nouns); (6) the verb; (7) the inflection; (8) the speech (or unified utterance, from a phrase to a poem). [? See below, pp. 225, 229–39. What is said in the *Poetics* regarding the parts of diction is so general in its bearing on the art of composition that there is no need of repeating all of it here. Only a few passages are utilized in the following.] A speech (*logos*, or unified utterance) is a composite significant sound, which may be a unit in either of two ways. It may signify one thing, as the definition of man: 'A biped land-animal.' Or the unity may be brought about through the conjunction of more than one utterance. [Thus the *Odyssey*, or the serenade of the Hoopoe in the *Birds* of Aristophanes, is one utterance through the binding together of a number.]

Nouns (or name-words) are of two kinds, simple and compound. By simple are meant those that are formed of non-significant elements, as the word γῆ (*earth*). A compound noun may be made up of a significant and a non-significant part [as ἄδικος (*unjust*)], though the distinction is lost when the parts are united; or it may be made up of two parts, both of which, taken by

CHAPTER 2

Diction proper as related to the art of [comedy]

The parts of diction

CHAPTER 2

Nouns [or names] are simple or compound

Multiple [as
in comedy]

themselves, are significant, [as ἀεροβατῶ (*air-tread* = 'I tread the air')]. A compound noun may also be triple or quadruple or multiple in form. [Compare σαλπυγγο-λογχ-υπηνά-δαι ('long-beard-lance-and-trumpet-men') in *Frogs* 966; σαρκασμο-πιτυο-κάμπται ('flesh-tearers-with-the-pine'), *ibid.*; σφραγιδ-ονυχ-αργο-κομήτας ('lazy long-haired fops with rings and natty nails'), *Clouds* 332; and also *Poly-machaero-plagides* (*Pseudolus* 988) and *Thesauro-chrysonico-chrysidēs* (*Captives* 286), facetious proper names taken over by Plautus from the Middle or the New Greek Comedy.]

Whatever the formation, a noun (or name) is either (1) the current term for a thing; or (2) a strange (or rare) word; or (3) a metaphor; or (4) an ornamental word; or (5) a newly-coined word; or a word that is (6) lengthened, or (7) curtailed, or (8) altered.

1. Current
terms2. Strange
words

By a current term is meant the word used by people about us; by a strange (or rare) word, one that is used in another region. Obviously the same word may be both strange or current, though not with reference to the same region. [Thus χάτα (*Lysistrata* 91) would be current in Sparta, but rare at Athens, where the word for 'good' would be ἀγαθός.]

3. Metaphor:
four kinds

Metaphor (including figures of speech generally) consists in the application to one thing of the name that belongs to another. (1) The name of the genus may be applied to a subordinate species. (2) The name of a species may be applied to the inclusive genus. (3) Under the same genus, the name of one species may be applied to another. Or (4) there may be a transference of names on grounds of analogy (or proportion).

4. Ornamental
words

[The ornamental word is listed, but not defined, in the *Poetics*. It may mean the superior or more beautiful word, when there is a choice of synonyms; see, for example, the use of πλάστιγξ ('scale') instead of σταθμός in the *Frogs* 1378.]

A newly-coined word is one that is wholly unknown to any region, and is applied to something by an individual poet, for there seem to be words of this origin [— as *koax*, representing the call of the frogs, in Aristophanes].

5. Coined words

A lengthened word is one in which a customary short vowel is made long, or in which an extra syllable is inserted [— as *Νοσῆιον* (*Frogs* 215) for *Νύσιον*].

6. Lengthened words

A curtailed word is one from which some part has been removed; [for example, *φῆτω* (*Peace* 1164) for *φῆτομα*].

7. Curtailed words

An altered word is one which the poet, having left some part unchanged, remodels the rest; [for example, *κιστῖς* (*Acharnians* 1137) from *κίστη*].

8. Altered words

In respect to diction, the ideal for the poet is to be clear without being mean. The clearest diction is that which is wholly made up of current terms (the ordinary words for things). But a style so composed is mean. But the language attains a distinction [suitable to comedy] when the poet makes use of terms that are less familiar, such as rare words, metaphors, lengthened forms — everything that deviates from the ordinary usage. Yet if one compose in a diction of such terms alone, the result will be either a riddle or a jargon — a riddle if the language be nothing but metaphors, and a jargon if it be nothing but strange words (dialectal forms and the like). [Compare the metaphorical utterance of the oracle as given by Demosthenes to the Sausage-seller in the *Knights* of Aristophanes (*Knights* 197-201); and the jargon uttered by Pseudartabas in the *Acharnians* 100, 104.] The comic poet should employ a certain admixture of these expressions that deviate from the ordinary; for distinction and elevation of style will result from the use

CHAPTER 22

Choice of words

The ideal is clearness and distinction

Riddles

Jargon

How to secure distinction

How clear-
ness

of such means as the strange word, the metaphor, the ornamental word, and the rest ; and clearness will arise from such part of the language as is in common use. Very important in helping to make the style clear without loss of distinction are the lengthened, curtailed, and altered forms of words. Their deviation from the customary forms will lend the quality of distinction ; and the element they have in common with ordinary usage will give clearness. **An obtrusive employment of**

Lengthened
words for
comic effect

the device of lengthening words will, of course, become ludicrous, [and hence will serve the ends of comedy] ; and the same thing is true of any similar stylistic procedure. **With metaphors also, and strange words, and the rest, a like effect will ensue if they are used improperly, and with the aim of causing laughter.** [The language of Aristophanes is in the main pure Attic and clear, attaining distinction, without affectation, and without coarseness, where the comic purpose allows.]

Metaphors,
strange words,
etc., for
comic effect

It is, indeed, important to make the right use of each of the elements mentioned — lengthened, curtailed, and altered words — as well as of compound and strange words. But most important by far is it to have a command of metaphor, this being the one thing the poet can not learn from others. It is the mark of genius, for to produce apt metaphors requires an intuitive perception of resemblances.

A command
of metaphor
is the mark
of genius

Varieties of
diction for
different
kinds of
poetry

Of the several kinds we have noted, [current words are best adapted to comedy,] compound words to the dithyramb, strange words to heroic metre [that is, to epic poetry], and metaphors to iambic metre [that is, to the tragic dialogue]. In heroic poetry, it is true, [and in comedy,] all special forms may be used. But iambic verse in comedy represents the spoken language,

and tends to employ the current term, the metaphor, and the ornamental word [or its opposite].

Herewith we close the discussion of comedy as an art of imitation in the form of action.

And now for the comic narrative. In this, as in comedy proper, the story should be constructed on dramatic principles: everything should turn about a single action, one that is a whole, and is organically perfect — having a beginning, and a middle, and an end. In this way, just as a living animal, individual and perfect, has its own excellence, so the narrative will arouse its own characteristic pleasure. In other words, the plot of a comic narrative must be unlike what we ordinarily find in histories, which of necessity represent, not a single action, but some one period, with all that happened therein to one or more persons, however unrelated the several incidents may have been. Thus two ludicrous incidents might occur on the same day without converging to the same end; and similarly one such incident may directly follow another in point of time, and yet there may be no sequence leading to one issue. Nevertheless, one may say that most writers of comic narratives commit this very fault of making their plots like chronicles. [Compare Byron's *Don Juan*, which illustrates the fault, with Fielding's *Tom Jones*, which avoids it.]

CHAPTER 23

What the
[comic] nar-
rative has
in common
with [com-
edy proper]

It is not a
chronicle;
it must have
organic unity

Further, the varieties of comic narrative must be similar to those of comedy proper. That is, the story must be (1) uninvolved or (2) involved, or else must be (3) one of [comic incident], or (4) of [comic] character. [Aristotle's division of narrative poetry corresponds in the last three points with the similar division under drama (p. 208), but not in the first. The narrative with an uninvolved plot might rank with the kind of

CHAPTER 24

Four varieties
[of comic nar-
rative]

Constituents
common to a
[comic] narra-
tive and
[comedy]

drama in which the effect is mainly dependent upon 'spectacle,' the story being, perhaps, 'episodic,' with much description ; otherwise there is a more troublesome discrepancy.] The constituent parts also must be the same as in comedy proper — save that the author does not employ the elements of music and spectacle ; for there are reversals and discoveries [and comic incidents] in this form of composition as in that. And the intellectual processes and the diction must be artistically worked out. [Thus *Don Quixote* is a story with an uninvolved plot, and one of comic incident ; and *Tom Jones* is, like the *Odyssey*, an example of an involved plot — since there are discoveries throughout, — and is a story of character].

The [comic]
narrative
differs from
[comedy] in
length

The advantage
of length

As for the length, an adequate limit has already been suggested : it must be possible for us to embrace the beginning and the end of the story in one view. But, through its capacity for extension, the narrative form has a great and peculiar advantage ; for in a comedy it is not possible to represent a number of incidents in the action as carried on simultaneously — the author is limited to the one thing done on the stage by the actors who are there. But the narrative form enables him to represent a number of incidents as simultaneously occurring ; and these, if they are suitable, materially add to the production. The increase in bulk tends to increase the variety of interest through diversity of incident in the episodes. Uniformity of incident quickly satiates the audience, and makes comedies fail on the stage.

The author is
not to obtrude
himself in
his [comic]
narrative

The master of comic narrative will not be unaware of the part to be taken by the author himself in his work. The author should, in fact, say as little as may be in his own person [save possibly for the comic effect arising from intentional and obvious disregard of the

principle], since in his personal utterances he is not an imitative artist. In mediocre comic narratives the authors continually express their own sentiments, and their snatches of artistic imitation are few and far between. But a masterly author [as Chaucer], after a brief preliminary, will straightway bring on a man, or a woman, or some other type, no one of them characterless, but each sharply differentiated.

An element of the marvelous unquestionably has a place in comedy; [and the irrational (or illogical), which is the chief factor in the marvelous, and which must as far as possible be excluded from tragedy, is more freely admitted in comedy as well as in comic narrative.] That the marvelous is a source of pleasure may be seen from the way in which people add to the story; for they always embellish the facts with striking details, in the belief that it will gratify the listeners. Yet it is Homer above all who has shown the rest how a lie should be told; for example, in the Bath Scene in the *Odyssey* (see below, pp. 295–303). The essence of the method is the use of a logical fallacy. Suppose that, whenever A exists or comes to pass, B must exist or occur; men think, if the consequent B exists, the antecedent A must also — but the inference is illegitimate. For the poet, accordingly, the right method is this: if the antecedent A is untrue, and if there is something else, B, which would exist or occur if A were true, one must elaborate on the B; for, recognizing the truth of the added details, we accept by fallacious inference the truth of A. [The method has an extensive application in Aristophanic comedy. Thus, by elaborating the details of the aerial city, the poet, in the *Birds*, leads us to accept the figment that such a polity has come into existence.]

A sequence of events which, though actually impossible, seems plausible should be preferred by the poet

The place of
the marvelous
and even the
irrational

Why people
tell lies

How to repre-
sent a lie
artistically

The principle
of 'probabili-
ty'

to what, though really possible, seems incredible. [Even the incredible incidents in comedy should receive an air of probability from the elaboration of 'true' details, and from a skilfully devised relation to one another.]

CHAPTER 25

Problems
and their
solutions

We come to problems and their solutions. [Aristotle's problems in criticism, and the principles of their solution, mainly concern the poetry of Homer, though they are stated in a general way; but at certain points what he says may take on a bearing upon comedy.]

1. Principle
of the object
of imitation

(1) The poet is an imitator, like a painter or any other maker of likenesses. Accordingly, he must in all cases represent one of three objects: (a) Things as they once were, or are now; (b) things as they are said or thought to be; (c) things as they ought to be for the ends of art. (2) His medium of expression is the diction, unadorned, or with an admixture of strange words and metaphors, or otherwise modified. (3) Further, the standard of correctness is not the same in Poetry as in Politics; it is different in Poetry [and imitative art generally] from that in any other field of study. [A citizen who fulfilled his duty to the State and in private life would satisfy the standards of Politics and Ethics; but in order to satisfy the conditions of comedy, a personage must be made to display some ludicrous shortcoming.] Within the limits of comedy

2. Principle
of the medium

3 Principle
of artistic
correctness:
poetry (in-
cluding com-
edy) has a
standard of
its own

there can be two kinds of error, the one (a) directly involving the art, the other (b) adventitious. If the comic poet has chosen something for the object of his imitation, and fails properly to represent what he has in mind, this is (a) a fault in his art itself. But if he has made an incorrect choice in the object he wishes to represent, so long as he succeeds in properly imitating [for the ends of comedy] the object he has in mind, his mistake is not one that concerns his art; it is (b) adventitious. Such are the considerations from which

Two kinds of
errors in
[comedy]

one must proceed in dealing with the strictures of critics.

First, then, the strictures relating to the art itself. If impossibilities have been unwittingly represented, the poet is open to criticism. Yet impossibilities may be justified, if their representation subserves the purpose of the art — for we must remember what has been said of the end of comedy; that is, they are justified if they give the passage they are in, or some other passage, a more ludicrous or surprising effect. Yet if the ends of comedy could have been as well or better subserved by scientific accuracy, the error is not justified; for the poet ought if possible to make no mistakes whatever.

Impossibilities may be justified in part

Yet the [comic] poet ought really to make no mistakes

Again, when an error is found, one must always ask: Is the mistake adventitious, arising from ignorance in some special field of knowledge, or does it concern the art of imitation as such? If a caricaturist thinks that a female deer has horns, for example, that is less of an error than to fail in representing the object as he conceives it.

Is the fault intrinsic or adventitious

Again, it may be objected that the representation of the poet is not true [to things as they are, or as they have been]. The answer may be that they are represented as they ought to be. [That is, as they ought to be represented for the ends of comedy. Thus Aristophanes represents Aeschylus and Euripides as worse dramatists than they were.] But if the representation be true neither to fact nor to the comic ideal, the answer may be that it accords with current legends and popular belief: 'People say so.' The unedifying comic tales about the gods, for instance, are, very possibly, neither true nor the preferable thing to relate; in fact, they may be as false and immoral as Xenophanes

Poetic [— comic] truth

declares. But they certainly are in keeping with popular belief. Of still other things which are objected to in comedy, one may possibly say, not that they are worse than the fact here and now, but that the fact was so at the time.

Artistic
[comic] pro-
priety

As for the question whether something said or done by some one in a comedy is proper or not ; to answer this we must not merely consider the intrinsic quality of the act or utterance, in order to see whether it is noble or base in itself ; we must also consider (a) the person who does or says the thing, (b) the person to whom it is done or said, or (c) when, or (d) in whose interest, or (e) with what motive, it is done or said. Thus we must examine any questionable word or act, to see whether the motive of the agent is to increase his advantage or to decrease his disadvantage. [Thus, in the *Frogs*, the political wisdom uttered by Euripides or Aeschylus is not to be judged at its face value. For example, the speech of Euripides in *Frogs* 1427-9, taken out of its surroundings, is almost sound advice ; but in its place it is the school-boy rhetoric of a ludicrous personage striving to win a ridiculous advantage over another personage of a similar sort, Aeschylus, from a god who plays the part of a buffoon. See also the seventh speech of the Impostor in *Tartuffe* 4.5, and Molière's note : '*C'est un scélérat qui parle.*']

An appeal
to the nature
of the med-
ium

The justice or injustice of other criticisms must be decided by the principles of poetic diction. For example, a mistaken objection may be raised to a passage because the critic fails to see that the comic poet is using a strange word, or a metaphor, or fails to discover the correct pronunciation, or the correct punctuation, or to observe that a grammatical ambiguity is possible, or that the custom of the language has changed, or that there is more than one possibility of meaning in the same word.

That is, the right procedure [in dealing with a great comic poet] is just the opposite of the method condemned by Glaucon, who says of certain critics: 'They begin with some unwarranted assumption, and, having pronounced judgment in a matter, they go on to argue from this; and if what the poet says does not agree with what they happen to think, they censure his imaginary mistake. [Thus it is often asserted that the singing-contest between Dionysus and the Chorus of Frogs has nothing to do with the rest of the play called the *Frogs*; there being a false assumption that the basis of the the play is an attack upon Euripides. But the object of imitation for Aristophanes is the Dionysiac musical and dramatic competition, transferred from Athens to the underworld, and otherwise distorted with comic intent — for example, by assimilation to one of the labors or contests (the suitable one) of Heracles. Throughout there is the notion of musical and literary emulation, exaggerated or attenuated. Accordingly, the singing-contest near the beginning is a suitable preliminary to the main episode of the comedy, the frog-like contest of the tragic poets at the end.]

Right and
wrong pro-
cedure in
criticism

In general, questions as to the poet's use of impossibilities must be decided by an appeal either (a) to the end of comedy, or (b) to the comic ideal, or (c) to what is commonly believed. For the ends of comedy, (a) a thing really impossible, but made plausible, is preferable to one that, though possible, does not win belief. And if such men as Pauson painted be called too ugly, the pictures may be defended as (b) true, to the comic ideal; for the comic type is necessarily inferior to the average and the actual.

The test for
alleged im-
possibilities

What the critics term improbable one must judge by an appeal to the end of comedy, or by (c) an appeal to popular belief, and by an attempt to show that on occasion the thing may not be improbable; for [as

For alleged
improbabil-
ities

Agathon suggested] it is likely that something improbable will now and then occur.

For alleged
contradictions in
language

As for alleged [unintentional] contradictions in the comic poet's language, these we must scrutinize as one deals with sophistical refutations in argumentation. Then we can see whether the poet in his several statements refers to the same thing, in the same relation, and in the same sense, and can judge whether or not he has contradicted what he himself says, or what a person of intelligence normally assumes as true.

Where the
critic had
best look
for errors
[in comedy]

The censure of the critic is justified, however, when it is directed against faulty sequence in the plot, and against nobility or depravity in the comic agents; that is, when there is no inherent necessity for excellence or baseness in the agents, and when the irrational sequence serves no comic purpose.

CHAPTER 26

A general
problem:
[which is su-
perior, comic
narrative or
comedy proper]

The question finally suggests itself: Which is the superior form of art, comic narrative or comedy proper? Those who favor the long narrative may argue thus: The less vulgar form is superior; and that which is addressed to the better audience is the less vulgar. If this is so, it is obvious that a pantomimic art such as comedy (on the stage) is exceedingly vulgar. So we are told that the comic narrative is addressed to a cultivated audience, which does not need gestures and postures, and comedy to an audience that is inferior and does need them. Accordingly, if comedy is a vulgar art, it evidently is the lower form.

[Comedy] can
produce its
effect when
merely read

But in reply we may say that it is quite possible for comedy to produce its characteristic effect without the appeals connected with presentation on the stage, in just the same way as a comic narrative; for if a comedy be merely read, its quality becomes evident.

Again, one must argue in favor of comedy proper that it contains every element found in the comic narrative, and that in addition it has elements, not inconsiderable, of its own in spectacle and music — and through the music the characteristic pleasure is distinctly heightened.

[Comedy] is more inclusive, compact, and vivid

Further, the greater vividness of comedy is felt when the play is read as well as when it is acted.

Still further, in comedy the imitation attains its end in less space. And this may be deemed an advantage, since the concentrated effect is more delightful than one which is long-drawn-out, and so diluted. [Consider the result, for example, if one were to lengthen out the *Clouds* of Aristophanes (1510 lines) into the number of lines in the *Odyssey* (12,110 lines).]

And again, the unity of action is less strict in the comic narrative; for if a narrative writer takes a strictly unified story, either he will tell it briefly, and it will seem abrupt, or he will make it conform to the usual scale of a long narrative, and then it will seem thin and unsubstantial.

The action [in comedy] is less diffuse

If, then, comedy proper is superior to comic narrative in all these respects, and particularly in fulfilling its special function as a form of poetry; and if we recall, as we must, that the two kinds of literature are to give us, not any chance pleasure, but the definite pleasure we have mentioned; it is clear that comedy proper, since it attains its poetic end more effectively than comic narrative, is the superior form of the two.

[Comedy is superior to comic narrative]

THE *TRACTATUS COISLINIANUS* TRANSLATED

[See above, pp. 10-15. The translation is mainly based upon the text of Kaibel, with use of the text and apparatus of Kayser. But I have discarded the schematic arrangement of the original, supplying such words as 'is divided into' in place of the oblique lines and horizontal braces which there indicate divisions and subdivisions under the various heads, and likewise adding appropriate numerals and letters in parentheses.]

Poetry is either (I) non-mimetic or (II) mimetic.

(I) Non-mimetic poetry is divided into (A) historical, (B) instructive. (B) Instructive poetry is divided into (1) didactic, (2) theoretical.

(II) Mimetic poetry is divided into (A) narrative, (B) dramatic and [directly] presenting action. (B) Dramatic poetry, or that [directly] presenting action, is divided into (1) comedy, (2) tragedy, (3) mimes, (4) satyr-dramas.

Tragedy removes the fearful emotions of the soul through compassion and terror. And [he says] that it aims at having a due proportion of fear. It has grief for its mother.

{Comedy is an imitation of an action that is ludicrous and imperfect, of sufficient length, [in embellished language,] the several kinds [of embellishment being] separately [found] in the [several] parts [of the play]; [directly presented] by persons acting, and not [given] through narrative; through pleasure and laughter effecting the purgation of the like emotions. It has laughter for its mother.

Laughter arises (I) from the diction [= expression] (II) from the things [= content].

- (I) From the diction, through the use of —
- (A) Homonyms
 - (B) Synonyms
 - (C) Garrulity
 - (D) Paronyms, formed by
 - (? 1) addition and
 - (? 2) clipping
 - (E) Diminutives
 - (F) Perversion
 - (1) by the voice
 - (2) by other means of the same sort
 - (G) Grammar and syntax
- (II) Laughter is caused by the things —
- (A) From assimilation, employed
 - (1) toward the worse
 - (2) toward the better
 - (B) From deception
 - (C) From the impossible
 - (D) From the possible and inconsequent
 - (E) From the unexpected
 - (F) From debasing the personages
 - (G) From the use of clownish (pantomimic) dancing
 - (H) When one of those having power, neglecting the greatest things, takes the most worthless
 - (I) When the story is disjointed, and has no sequence

Comedy differs from abuse, since abuse openly censures the bad qualities attaching [to men], whereas comedy requires the so-called emphasis [? or 'inuendo'].

The joker will make game of faults in the soul and in the body.

As in tragedies there should be a due proportion of fear, so in comedies there should be a due proportion of laughter.

The substance of comedy consists of (1) plot, (2) *ethos*, (3) *dianoia*, (4) diction, (5) melody, (6) spectacle.

The comic plot is the structure binding together the ludicrous incidents.

The characters [*ethe*] of comedy are (1) the buffoonish, (2) the ironical, and (3) those of the impostors.

The parts of *dianoia* are two: (A) opinion and (B) proof. [Proofs (or 'persuasions') are of] five [sorts]: (1) oaths, (2) compacts, (3) testimonies, (4) tortures ['tests' or 'ordeals'], (5) laws.

The diction of comedy is the common, popular language. The comic poet must endow his personages with his own native idiom, but must endow an alien with the alien idiom.

Melody is the province of the art of music, and hence one must take its fundamental rules from that art.

Spectacle is of great advantage to dramas in supplying what is in concord with them.

Plot, diction, and melody are found in all comedies, *dianoia*, *ethos*, and spectacle in few.

The [quantitative] parts of comedy are four: (1) prologue, (2) the choral part, (3) episode, (4) exode. The prologue is that portion of a comedy extending as far as the entrance of the chorus. The choral part [choricon] is a song by the chorus when it [the song] is of adequate length. An episode is what lies between two choral songs. The exode is the utterance of the chorus at the end.

The kinds of comedy are: (1) Old, with a superabundance of the laughable; (2) New, which disregards laughter, and tends toward the serious; (3) Middle, which is a mixture of the two.

THE *TRACTATUS COISLINIANUS* AMPLIFIED AND ILLUSTRATED

[For the sake of clearness it has seemed better first (above, pp. 224-6) to give a rendering of the succinct Tractate by itself, and then to repeat that rendering, as follows, with interlarded comment and illustration.]

Poetry is either (I) non-mimetic or (II) mimetic. Kinds of poetry
[In the *Poetics* such a thing as 'non-mimetic' poetry is not recognized; there poetry is regarded as in its nature mimetic, and versified history, or medicine, or the like, is excluded from the realm of poetry; yet see above, p. 12.]

(I) Non-mimetic poetry is divided into (A) historical, (B) instructive. Non-mimetic
[(A) Historical poetry finds illustration in the poem of Choerilus on the Persian war (see Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 3. 14, and compare above, p. 141); in the *Pharsalia* of Lucan; and in Samuel Daniel's *The Civil Wars between the two Houses of Lancaster and York*.]

(B) Instructive [*παιδευτική*] poetry is divided into (1) didactic [*δωρηγητική*], (2) theoretical. [In a comprehensive scheme of Greek poetry room would be found for Hesiod; the *Theogony* is perhaps 'theoretical,' and the *Works and Days* 'didactic.' Other examples of didactic poetry would be the lines from Scylon quoted in Aristotle's *Constitution of Athens* and Aristotle's own scolion on virtue (compare above, pp. 12-13), and Wordsworth's *Ode to Duty*. Other examples of theoretical poetry would be Parmenides' *On Nature*, and similar cosmological poems of the pre-Socratic philosophers; also the poem of Lucretius, and Erasmus Darwin's *The Botanic Garden*. In *Poetics* 1. 1447^b 16-20 Empedocles is said to be a 'physicist rather than a poet'; in 21. 1457^b 24, and elsewhere, he is cited in illustration of details in the theory of poetry!]

Mimetic

(II) Mimetic poetry is divided into (A) narrative [as the *Odyssey*], (B) dramatic and [directly] presenting action. (B) Dramatic poetry, or that [directly] presenting action, is divided into (1) comedy [as the *Birds* of Aristophanes], (2) tragedy [as Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*], (3) mimes [as the mimes of Sophron and Xenarchus (see above, pp. 168–70)], (4) satyr-dramas [as the lost *Phorcydes* of Aeschylus (see *Poetics* 18), the partly-preserved *Ichneutae* (*Trackers*) of Sophocles, and the *Cyclops* of Euripides (translated by Shelley)].

Tragedy

Tragedy removes the fearful emotions [φοβερά παθήματα] of the soul through compassion and terror [δὲ οἴκτου καὶ δέουζ]. And [some one (? Aristotle) says] that it [tragedy] aims at having a due proportion of fear [φόβου]. It has grief [λύπη] for its mother. [Does the 'proportion' (συμμετρία) mean a due measure of fear, not an excess of it, as compared with pity? Or are we to understand that the latent fear of the spectators is to be aroused by tragedy, and so reduced to moderation?]

Comedy. A definition

Comedy is an imitation of an action that is ludicrous and imperfect,¹ of sufficient [or 'perfect'] length, [in embellished language,] the several kinds of embellishment being separately found in the several parts of the play;² directly presented by persons acting, and not in the form of narrative;³ through pleasure and laughter effecting the purgation of the like [or 'of the said'] emotions [τὴν τῶν τοιούτων παθημάτων κάθαρσιν]. It has laughter for its mother. [For a discussion of comic purgation, see above, pp. 60–98. On laughter as the 'mother' of comedy, see above, p. 12.]

¹ Reading *γελοιῶς*, as Kayser conjectures, for *γελοῖον*, and taking *ἀμοῖρον* as of feminine gender.

² Following Vahlen. Compare also above, p. 179.

³ Literally: 'an action . . . of persons doing, and not through narrative' (or 'through report').

Laughter arises (I) from the diction, (II) from the things done. [‘ Things ’ or ‘ things done ’ would include mental acts as well as physical. There is necessarily some overlapping between the two main categories of words (= expression) and things (= content), as there is overlapping between the sub-heads under each. For a tripartite division by Aristotle of the sources of laughter, see above, pp. 62, 138.]

Laughter from
(I) diction
(II) things

(I) Laughter arises from the diction [λέξις] through the use of —

Diction:
(A) homonyms

(A) Homonyms. [That is, *equivoca*, or ambiguities. Things having the same name, but in themselves distinct, are homonymous. Thus, in the comedy of Aristophanes the changes are rung upon Πλοῦτος, the god, and πλοῦτος, wealth. So ‘ Iris ’ (‘ iris ’) may refer to (1) the messenger of the gods, (2) the rainbow, (3) a halo (round the moon or round a candle), (4) the flower. ‘ Spring ’ has more than one meaning in English, as in the remark of the tramp to the tourist: ‘ Speaking of bathing in famous springs, I bathed in the spring of ’86.’ Compare the following: ‘ Old Gaunt indeed, and gaunt in being old ’ (*Richard II* 2. 1. 74). ‘ I will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream; it shall be called *Bottom’s Dream*, because it hath no bottom ’ (*MND*. 4. 1. 215–7). Falstaff: ‘ Their points being broken — ’ Poins: ‘ Down fell their hose ’ (*1 Henry IV* 2. 4. 216–7). — ‘ Points ’ here has the two meanings of sword-points and the tagged lace for attaching the hose to the doublet. The use of *equivoca* is, of course, very frequent in the comedy of every age. Thus the envoys from Persia, in *Acharnians* 91–2, ‘ come, bringing Pseudartabas, “ the King’s Eye ” ’; and Dicaeopolis on hearing the title rejoins: ‘ Would that a crow might peck it out, and yours, too, the ambassador’s ’ (92–3). See also the various turns on the word πόλος in *Birds* 179–84, and again on ὄρνις in *Birds* 719–21 (Rogers’ translation):

And whene'er you of omen or augury speak, 't is a bird you
are always repeating;

A rumor's a bird, and a sneeze is a bird, and so is a word
or a meeting.

A servant's a bird, and an ass is a bird.

The number of meanings a given word (e. g., *bow*) may have is, therefore, not necessarily restricted to two, especially if, as in English, we include all the meanings indicated by the same sound (*bow*, *bough*). 'Equivocal terms,' says Aristotle, in *Rhetoric* 3. 2 (see above, p. 144), 'are the class of words most useful to the sophist, for it is with the help of these that he juggles.' The comic poet also juggles with them.]

Diction:
(B) synonyms

(B) Synonyms. [The interpretation is obvious. In the passage last quoted Aristotle continues: 'Synonyms are most useful to the poet. By synonyms in ordinary use I mean, for instance, "to go" and "to walk"; these are at once accepted and synonymous terms.' Different terms applied to the same thing, then, are synonymous — as *go*, *fare*, *proceed*. So one may call the same act 'stealing' or 'conveying.' "Convey" the wise it call. "Steal"! foh! a fico for the phrase! (*Merry Wives* 1. 3. 30). The comic poet has the option of calling the worse thing by the better name, or the better thing by the worse name. By the use of metaphor, the number of names applied to the same thing may be indefinitely extended. As Aristotle points out (*Rhetoric* 3. 2), Dionysius 'the Brazen' in his elegies called poetry 'Calliope's screech' — poetry and screeching being both of them 'voices'; and Simonides (*ibid.*; see above, p. 155), when asked to compose an ode in honor of a victory in the mule-race, at first refused to write about 'half-asses,' and then, when a larger fee was offered, wrote:

Hail, daughters of storm-footed mares --

'yet they were equally daughters of the asses.' Similarly, hands may be called 'pickers and stealers' (*Hamlet* 3. 2. 340). Or take the following expressions for *late* and *early*: 'One that converses more with the buttock of the night than with the forehead of the morning' (*Coriolanus* 2. 1. 53-5). Or take the case when Euelpides

wishes to kiss the Nightingale, and Peisthetaerus warns him (*Birds* 672): 'O wretched fool, her beak has two little spits' (mandibles). Starkie (*Hermathena* 42. 30-1) gives examples from Shakespeare and Molière, and notes the fertility of Rabelais in strings of depreciatory synonyms — for example, the epithets addressed to monks in the inscription over the entrance to the convent of Thelema.]

(C) Garrulity. [This is ἀδολεσχία, a staple device of comic writers, to which Socrates makes allusion in the *Apology* and *Phaedo* (see above, pp. 104-5). Aristotle refers to ἀδολεσχία, but not in connection with comedy (see above, p. 144; and compare *Rhetoric* 2. 13. 1390^a9, 2. 22. 1395^b26, *Nicomachean Ethics* 3. 13. 1117^b35, *De Sophisticis Elenchis* 3. 165^b15, *Problems* 18. 8. 917^b4, *Historia Animalium* 11. 492^b2). The simplest case is the repetition of the same word over and over again (see Tzetzes, below, p. 288), but the term embraces verbosity of every sort — bombast, triviality, learned nonsense (in the philosophical discussions of the *Clouds*, in Swift's *Voyage to Laputa*, in *Les Femmes Savantes* of Molière), the garrulity of age, of children and the childish, of the idle, of clowns, domestics, and the like. Dogberry is 'garrulous' in the pompous style. The pettifoggers and quacks of Molière are 'garrulous'; in *Le Malade Imaginaire* the first speech of the Hypochondriac is an instance, the harangue of Monsieur Diafoirus in 2. 6 is another, and the address of his son Thomas to Angélique (quoted below, pp. 242-3, under 'assimilation') yet another. Thomas is twice foiled (*ibid.* 2. 6, 7) in a long-winded memorized address intended for her step-mother. The choruses in the *Acharnians* and the *Wasps* indulge in garrulity; for example (*Wasps* 233-9): 'O Strymodore of Conthyle, best of our crew of dicasts, has Euergides appeared, or Chabes of Phlya? Ah, here you are, alas and alack! all that yet remains of that youth so flourishing then when we kept the watch together, you and I, in Byzantium. Remember how, as we paced our round by night, we found and filched the baker's tray, and chopped it up

Diction:
(C) garrulity

to cook our pimpernel withal.' It would be easy to multiply examples, as from Shakespeare (*Measure for Measure* 2. 1. 89-105): Pompey: 'Sir, she came in, great with child, and longing — saving your honor's reverence — for stewed prunes. Sir, we had but two in the house, which at that very distant time stood, as it were, in a fruit-dish, a dish of some three-pence; your honors have seen such dishes; they are not China dishes, but very good dishes.' Escalus: 'Go to, go to; no matter for the dish, sir.' Pompey: 'No indeed, sir, not of a pin. You are therein in the right. But to the point: as I say, this Mistress Elbow, being, as I say, with child, and being great-bellied, and longing, as I said, for prunes, and having but two in the dish, as I said, Master Froth here, this very man, having eaten the rest, as I said, and, as I say, paying for them very honestly; for, as you know, Master Froth, I could not give you three-pence again.' Another good case is that of Launce in *Two Gentlemen of Verona* 2. 3. 21-33. The chorus in Aristophanes' *Birds* is likewise talkative; see their 'anapaests' (684 ff.) — above all, their account of the creation and of their own importance in the affairs of men (*Birds* 693-722). Parodies and travesties are likely to be of the same windy nature; thus, the monody uttered by Aeschylus in the *Frogs* in imitation of Euripides (*Frogs* 1331-63), beginning (Rogers' translation):

O darkly-light mysterious Night,
 What may this Vision mean,
 Sent from the world unseen
 With baleful omens rife;
 A thing of lifeless life,
 A child of sable night,
 A ghastly curdling sight,
 In black funereal veils,
 With murder, murder in its eyes,
 And great enormous nails?

Many passages of garrulity, as the last-quoted, betray a lack of sequence, which in itself may be a source of laughter, and is so listed in the Tractate (see below, p. 257). But long-winded speeches afford opportunity for various sorts of comic effect, and hence contain

illustrations of other categories. The long anapaestic chorus of the *Birds* has already been cited for an example of homonyms: 'A rumor's a bird, and a sneeze is a bird, and so is a word or a meeting' (*Birds* 720).]

(D) Paronyms. They are formed (1) by adding to a word, and (2) by taking something away from it. [Or the sense may be that they are formed by first dropping some part of a word and then adding something to what remains. A paronym is, so to speak, a name lying at the side of another. In each case, two words are concerned, one of them being derived from the other, generally by a change of termination. The relation may be a true one according to scientific principles. Or it may be a fancied one according to popular notions of etymology — as in the time of Aristophanes, before the advent of strict linguistic science. Or it may be a pretended one based upon an assumed principle. Thus Hermippus (frg. 4, Kock 1. 225–6) derives the rolling 'year' (ἐνιαυτός), which contains all within itself, from ἐν αὐτῷ. Similar derivatives are common in everyday speech while a language is in the making. In comedy they are extempore formations, or else formations otherwise rare in the language. In a given instance it may be difficult to say whether the word is a coinage of the poet, or a term, not previously recorded, from common usage. If the reading 'great oneyers' is authentic, a paronym formed by addition is found in Gadshill's 'I am joined with no foot-land-rakers, no long-staff sixpenny strikers, none of these mad mustachio-purple-hued malt-worms, but with nobility and tranquillity, burgomasters and great oneyers' (1 *Henry IV* 2. 1. 76–9). So also (from αὐτός, by dropping ε and adding -τατος) αὐτότατος in *Plutus* 83: 'Are you really *he*?' 'I am.' 'Himself?' 'His own self's self.' Here too, perhaps, belongs κυντότατος — 'the most shameless (most doglike) of all' (see above, pp. 29, 150). In a comic compound epithet, if we take the first element as a base, the whole may be regarded as a paronym derived from it. Those of Gadshill (as 'long-staff sixpenny strikers' and 'mad mustachio-

Diction:
(D) paronyms

purple-hued malt-worms'), formed by addition, may be compared with Aristophanes' σαλπιγγολογχοπηνάδαι, σαρκασμοπιτυοκάμπται (*Frogs* 966): 'Great long-beard-lance-and-trumpet-men, flesh-tearers with the pine' (cf. Starkie, *Hermathena* 42. 33; and compare above, p. 212). Starkie (*Acharnians*, pp. xlix–liv) gives nine subdivisions under the head of Paronymy: (1) compounds; (2) coinages to suit special occasions; (3) jocular feminine forms; (4) comic comparatives and superlatives (as αὐτότατος); (5) character-names with diverse terminations (as κάνθων in *Peace* 82); (6) verbal formations (as λυδίζειν in *Knights* 523); (7) comic adverbs (as μαγειρικῶς in *Acharnians* 1015); (8) imitative words and phrases (as the mimic notes of birds, frogs, and musical instruments); (9) certain comic exclamations, mostly imitative. But the device, strictly considered, seems to involve a stem of some word in regular usage; the customary termination of the word may be dropped, and then something may be added. Or again, it would seem, something may be clipped from the end (? or beginning, or middle) of a word, so that the resultant coinage is shorter than the ordinary word. This last case apparently is hard to find in comedy, save as comedy makes use of ordinary colloquial contractions; compare also *Gib* (for Gilbert) and *Daw* (for David) in the Towneley *Secunda Pastorum*. It would simplify matters could we reverse the order of the Tractate under this category, and say, 'paronymy by subtraction and addition,' since commonly the familiar ending of a word is dropped, and an unusual ending then supplied — as in the proverbial jocular derivation of *Middleton* from *Moses*: you take away the termination *-oses*, and add the termination *-iddleton*. So the Hostess in *Henry V* 2. 3. 10 shortens *Abraham* to *Arthur*, saying of the dead Falstaff: 'Nay, sure, he 's not in hell; he 's in Arthur's bosom, if ever any man went to Arthur's bosom.' Middleton from *Moses*, and Arthur from *Abraham*, recall the example of paronymy preserved by Tzetzes (see below, p. 288), 'I Momax am called Midas' (which has disturbed textual critics); they will perhaps illustrate the case of proper names derived

one from another by clipping or addition or both, though they trench upon the field of comic perversions (see below, under F). The categories of paronyms and perversion overlap, since a perversion often contains some considerable part of the word it travesties.]

(E) Diminutives. [These, of course, are usually derivatives. Aristotle has defined and illustrated them in *Rhetoric* 3. 2 (see above, pp. 29, 156): 'Again, without abandoning a given epithet, one may turn it into a diminutive. By a diminutive I mean a form that lessens either the good or the bad in a description; for example, the banter of Aristophanes in the *Babylonians*, where he uses "coinlet" for *coin*, "cloaklet" for *cloak*, "gibelet" for *gibe*, and "plaguelet." ' Greek is rich in diminutives, as is also Italian — much more so than English, which in this point lags behind German; Starkie (*Acharnians*, pp. lv–lvi) lists thirteen such endings in Aristophanes, with many examples (mostly under -ιον, -ιδ-ιον, -άριον, and -ίσκος, -ίσκη). Diminutives may be endearing, caressing, ludicrous, or contemptuous, two or more of these qualities often being strangely mingled in the same epithet. Examples are: Εὐριπίδιον (*Acharnians* 404 — 'Euripides, Euripidarling! hearken!'); the same form (*Acharnians* 475 — 'Euripidarling, my best and sweetest!'); Σωκράτιδιον (*Clouds* 223 — 'Dear little Socrates!'); the same form (*ibid.* 237 — 'Come down, dear little Socrates!'); again (*ibid.* 746 — 'O dearest little Socrates!'); ἐρπίδιον (*Birds* 223 — Euelpides exclaims, at the sound of the flute imitating the Nightingale: 'O Zeus the king, hark to the little birdie's voice!'). Similar effects are attained in English, partly by the use of such diminutives as we possess (as *-ie* in *birdie*), partly by means of additional words, as adjectives; thus: 'Come, sweet Audry, We must be married, or we must live in bawdry' (*AYL.* 3. 3. 93–4); 'What sayst thou, bully Bottom?' (*MND.* 3. 1. 8.) Other examples are: 'Most brisk juvenile, and eke most lovely Jew' (*MND.* 3. 1. 92); 'I'll meet thee, Pyramus, at Ninny's tomb' (*ibid.* 3. 1. 94); 'Why, that's my dainty Ariel!' (*Tempest*

Dicton :
(E) Di-
minutives

5. I. 95). The same effect is gained by the use of the rhymes in the song by Titania (herself a diminutive!) in *MND*. 3. I. 162–71: *eyes, dewberries, mulberries, humble-bees, thighs, eyes, arise, butterflies, eyes, courtesies*; consider, too, the names of the attendant elves, particularly Mustard-seed. Flute's perversion, 'Ninny's tomb' ('"Ninus' tomb," man!' interrupts Quince) belongs equally well under the next head.]

Diction :

(F) perversion

(F) Perversion (1) by the voice, (2) by other means of the same sort. ['This' — ἐξᾱλλαγή, — says Rutherford (p. 444), 'is not identical with the ἐξᾱλλαγή' of the *Poetics*, 'and wholly different from the ἐξᾱλλαγή' of the *Rhetoric*. 'It is further so particularized that there can be no doubt that it is any ludicrous perversion of a word's intention by means of mispronunciation or of intonation' (that is, by the voice), 'or by gesture, grimace, wink, twinkle in the eye' (that is, by other means in the same class with the voice), 'or, of course, by both combined.' An ancient example (see below, p. 288) is that of ὦ Ζεῦ δέσποτα ('O Lord Zeus!') twisted by pronunciation into ὦ βδεῦ (Lat. *peditum*) δέσποτα. Bentley would identify the passage with the end of line 940 in the *Lysistrata*; but the joke would be more pat in one or another of the passages containing ὦ Ζεῦ βασιλεῦ — as *Clouds* 2, or *Birds* 223 — and we need not stickle for the accuracy of the tradition that gives the relatively unimportant word δέσποτα. We find a rather good English parallel in *Henry V* 4. 4. 4–8, where Pistol captures the French soldier. Pistol: 'Art thou a gentleman? What is thy name? Discuss.' French Soldier: 'O Seigneur Dieu!' Pistol: 'O Signieur Dew should be a gentleman. Perpend my words, O Signieur Dew, and mark.' The laughable through perversion by the voice and similar means would therefore include many puns — though not those arising from the confusion of things having names exactly alike. Thus Falstaff in *Henry IV* 2. 4. 241–2: 'If reasons ('raisins') were as plenty as blackberries, I would give no man a reason upon compulsion, I.' Or take the unconscious pun

uttered by the illiterate maid-servant Martine to the purist Bélise in *Les Femmes Savantes* 2. 6. 64-5. Bélise: 'Veux-tu toute ta vie offenser la grammaire?' Martine: 'Qui parle d'offenser grand'mère ni grand-père?' But the category embraces all sorts of perversions in diction, from Fluellen's Welsh pronunciation of 'Alexander the Pig' (*Henry V* 4. 7. 12-18 — 'The pig, or the great, or the mighty, or the huge, or the magnanimous, are all one reckonings, save the phrase is a little variations') to Alcibiades' lisp (*Wasps* 42-6, esp. 45 — 'Theolus' for *Theorus*). Add the Hostess' 'variation' on the death of Falstaff: 'A' made a finer end and went away an it had been any christom child' (*Henry V* 2. 3. 11-12 — a perversion of *Christian* and *chrism* together). There is a succession of instances during the preparations for their play by the artisans in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*: 'Phibbus' for *Phoebus* (*MND*. 1. 2. 3); 'Thisne' for *Thisby* (1. 2. 51-3 — but the case is also one of diminutives: 'I'll speak in a monstrous little voice, "Thisne, Thisne!"'); 'Saying thus, or to the same defect' (3. 1. 38 — 'defect' = *effect*); 'He comes to disfigure, or to present, the person of Moonshine' (3. 1. 57-8); 'I will aggravate my voice so that I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove' (2. 1. 80-1). Again, Bottom: 'Thisby, the flowers have odious savors sweet' — Quince: 'Odorous, odorous.' Bottom: — 'odors savors sweet' (3. 1. 79-81). Finally, Quince: 'And he is a very paramour for a sweet voice.' Flute: 'You must say "paragon"'; a paramour is, God bless us! a thing of naught' (4. 2. 11-14).]

(G) Grammar and syntax. [So I paraphrase *σχῆμα λέξεως*, which covers not only the grammatical and syntactical relations of discourse, but also the rhythm and cadence of a sentence — the arrangement of the diction in a general sense. Laughter arises from inflections and syntax formed on a spurious analogy with correct usage. In ordinary speech such forms are barbarisms; and taken from the usage of illiterates they may serve a comic purpose. The luckless Martine has offended

Diction:
(G) grammar
and syntax

Bélise by the '*solécisme horrible*': 'Mon Dieu! je n'avons pas étugué (= 'étudié') comme vous, Et je parlons tout droit comme on parle cheux (= 'chez') nous.' Bélise: 'Ton esprit, je l'avoue, est bien matériel: *Je n'est qu'un singulier, avons est pluriel*. Veux-tu toute ta vie offenser la grammaire?' (*Femmes Savantes* 2.6. 58-9, 62-4). Similarly Lucas uses the illiterate form *j'avons* in *Le Médecin Malgré Lui* 1. 6. However, the comic poet outdoes ordinary illiterate usage (though often through the speech of rustics, servants, and the like) in producing spurious grammatical forms and false congruities. Compare Toinette (disguised as a physician) in *Le Malade Imaginaire* 3. 14: '*Ignorantus, ignoranta, ignorantum*.' Or compare the Latin in Calverley's *The Cock and the Bull* (below, p. 258) with that of Sganarelle in *Le Médecin Malgré Lui* 2. 6: '*Quia substantivo, et adjectivum, concordat in generi, numerum, et casus*.' Calverley's skit, in burlesque imitation of *The Ring and the Book*, makes use of Browning's *σχήμα λέξεως* (even in the cadence of the title) for comic effect. In *Two Gentlemen of Verona* 2. 5. 25-33 Shakespeare gives the following. Speed: 'What an ass art thou! I understand thee not.' Launce: 'What a block art thou, that thou canst not. My staff understands me.' Speed: 'What thou sayest?' Launce: 'Ay, and what I do, too. Look thee, I'll but lean, and my staff understands me.' Speed: 'It stands under thee, indeed.' Launce: 'Why, stand-under and under-stand is all one.' Of this order is the youthful Porson's answer to the question, whether Brutus did right in assassinating Caesar: 'Non bene fecit, nec male fecit; sed inter-fecit.' It is often difficult, sometimes impossible, to translate pleasantries of this type; perhaps one may partly succeed with the dialogue between Euripides and his stupid kinsman in *Thesmophoriazusae* 26-8. Euripides: 'See this wicket?' Mnesilochus: 'By Heck! should think I did.' Euripides: 'Now silence, you!' Mnesilochus: 'I silence the wicket?' Euripides: 'Hark!' Mnesilochus: 'I hark-and-silence the wicket?' In the *Clouds*, as Starkie notes, the old peasant learns from

Socrates not to confuse ἀλεκτρυών ('rooster') and ἀλεκτρυάινα ('roostress'), and discovers that the correct form ἡ κάρδοπος is not correct at all — it should be ἡ καρδόπη (*Clouds* 850—2, 669—75. 1251 — compare Starkie's rendering, 'kneading-jack' and 'kneading-jill'). The category of false grammar overlaps with that of perversion; see 'paramour' and 'paragon' at the end of the preceding paragraph, and perhaps Mistress Quickly's 'thou bastardly rogue' (*2 Henry IV* 2. 1. 51, — ?'bastardly' = *dastardly*). In parodies (see below, pp. 258—9), the individual style of the author parodied — his pet forms and constructions — will become the standard which the comic writer travesties; so it is in *The Cock and the Bull*, and in the samples offered by Euripides and Aeschylus of their own and each other's wares in the *Frogs*. For the expression γῆμα λέξεως in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* see above, p. 145.]

(II) Laughter arises from the things. ['Things' (πράγματα) include acts and objects in themselves (as distinct from their names, which belong under 'diction' = λέξις), and persons in themselves (again as distinct from their names), regarded objectively. 'Things' are, above all, *things done*, that is, deeds and activities, including the acts and experiences of the mind. But it is hard to dissociate a *thing* from its *name*, and hence, as we have observed, a particular example of the ludicrous may sometimes be classified under more than one head and sub-head. If a garrulous person, for instance, uses the same word over and over, he will keep talking about the same object — as prunes. In general, however, we have this distinction: if the humor disappears when the joke is translated (as in Porson's joke on Brutus and Caesar), we have to do with 'laughter from the diction'; if not, then with 'laughter from the things.' Yet a shrewd translator will often be surprisingly close to the foreign language in his rendering of 'laughter from the diction.']

Laughter
from things

(A) From assimilation. The assimilation may be

Things: (A)
assimilation

(1) of what is better (superior) to what is worse (inferior), or (2) *vice versa*.

ssimilation
, the worse

(1) Assimilation or equation of what is better to what is worse. [Tzetzes (below, p. 289) gives as an instance of (1) the transformation of the master Dionysus into the slave Xanthias (*Frogs* 494–502); and we may add the assimilation of Xanthias himself to a beast of burden (*ibid.* 9–20, 32). Since comedy in general tends to represent things as worse than they commonly are, the principle of assimilation can be freely illustrated from the basic ideas of many plays. Thus men (superior) are assimilated to birds (inferior), to frogs, and to wasps, in the respective comedies of Aristophanes, and to the denizens of the farmyard in Rostand's *Chantecler*. In like manner Swift assimilates men to pygmies, to heavy giants, to horses, to apes. The method also reaches to detail; so that, as Starkie remarks (*Acharnians*, p. lxii), so long as they represent πράγματα, and not merely λέξεις, comparisons, metaphors, and even epithets, come under this head or that of (2) assimilation to the better. The Platonic Socrates' comparison of the State to a sluggish horse, and of himself to a gadfly sent to arouse it (*Apology* 30, 31), is a case in point; of the same order are Alcibiades' comparisons of Socrates to the busts of Silenus, to Marsyas the satyr, and to a brent-geese (the last taken from Aristophanes — see above, p. 113), in *Symposium* 215, 216, 221. So the following from Shakespeare. Boy (speaking of Falstaff): 'He is very sick, and would to bed. Good Bardolph, put thy face between his sheets, and do the office of a warming-pan' (*Henry V* 2. 1. 83–5). Prince: 'How now, wool-sack! What mutter you?' Falstaff: 'A king's son. If I do not beat thee out of thy kingdom with a dagger of lath, and drive all thy subjects afore thee like a flock of wild geese, I'll never wear hair on my face more' (1 *Henry IV* 2. 4. 136–40). Falstaff: 'Sblood, you starveling, you elf-skin, you dried neat's-tongue, you bull's pizzle, you stock-fish! O! for breath to utter what is like thee; you tailor's yard, you sheath, you bow case, you vile standing tuck'

(*ibid.* 2. 4. 246–50). Other examples from Aristophanes are the following. In the ‘thinking-house’ of Socrates dwell the men who ‘teach and persuade us that heaven is a muffle enveloping us, and that we are the charcoal within’ (*Clouds* 94–7 — comparison with an oven); Brasidas and Cleon are the ‘pestle’ and ‘mortar’ of Sparta and Athens (*Peace* 259 ff.); Euelpides looks like a gander done by a penny-artist (*Birds* 803–6). Euelpides: ‘What are you laughing at?’ Peisthetærus: ‘At your long wing-feathers. Do you know what you are like, your wings and you? Just like a gander in a cheap sketch.’ Euelpides: ‘And you like a bald-headed blackbird.’ Here, too, may be noticed the ‘Dionysus, son of — Wine-jar,’ in *Frogs* 22, where the epithet we anticipate is *son of Zeus* or the like; the assimilation to ‘wine-jar’ may therefore be classified also under ‘the unexpected’ (see below, p. 250). The hint from Tzetzes (above) suggests that many comic transformations and disguises fall under the present head of assimilation to the better or the worse. The ‘translated’ Bottom, ‘with an ass’s head’ (*MND.* 3. 1), belongs in this category as well as in that of ‘the impossible’ (below, p. 244). The interchange of master and servant, the disguise of lovers as menials so as to obtain entrance into the house of the beloved, and similar devices of the New Greek Comedy and its successors, hardly need to be mentioned; we immediately think of Valère finding employment in the household of Harpagon in *L’Avaro*, Léandre as an apothecary assisting Sganarelle in *Le Médecin Malgré Lui*, etc.]

(2) Assimilation or equation of what is worse to what is better. [Tzetzes (below, p. 289) gives as the other side of his instance the transformation of the slave Xanthias into his master Dionysus (*Frogs* 494 ff.). This amounts to an assimilation of Xanthias to Heracles (see *ibid.* 499), and brings to mind the similar equation of the unheroic Dionysus to Heracles earlier in the play (*ibid.* 40 ff., 108 ff.). The principle involved has a general value for comedy. It may serve to bring out a ludicrous contrast in which ‘the worse’ gains nothing

Assimilation
to the better

from its ostensible approximation to 'the better'; so in the examples just given, and in the case of Bottom, who, after his metamorphosis, is called 'angel' and 'gentleman' by Titania (*MND.* 3. 1. 126, 161). Or it may serve to elevate or soften what is too low or painful for comedy, to the right comic degree of inferiority that gives no pain. In the *Birds*, some of the qualities taken on by men are those in which winged creatures excel all human beings, as Ariel, in *The Tempest*, excels them; the approximation in plumage, color, song, and flight, helps in the embellishment of the play. And particular comparisons may be, not odious, but complimentary. Yet in the main the equation of the worse to the better in comedy is ludicrous, and the compliments are ironical. 'Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful,' says the enchanted Titania to the transformed Bottom with his decoration (*MND.* 3. 1. 145). The assimilation of Sganarelle to a great physician in *Le Médecin Malgré Lui* lends but a mock-dignity to that jocular rustic. The elevation of Sly in *The Taming of the Shrew* does not ennoble him. And servants disguised as masters become only the more ridiculous. In the way of detail, Starkie (*Acharnians*, p. lxii) adds the following examples. Strepsiades compares the loss of his shoes with the squandering of State funds by Pericles — on 'the service' (*Clouds* 858—9); the huge dung-beetle on which Trygaeus will fly up to Zeus is identified with the winged Pegasus of Bellerophon (*Peace* 73—89); the wall built by the birds for Cloudcuckootown is twice as high as the famous wall of Babylon, and on its top chariots could drive and pass with horses as big as the Wooden Horse that caused the fall of Troy (*Birds* 552, 1124—9). Compare also the garrulous Euphuistic elaborations of the Physiologus noted by Starkie (*Hermathena* 42. 36—7) in Shakespeare and Molière. Falstaff: 'For, though the camomile, the more it is trodden on, the faster it grows, yet youth, the more it is wasted, the sooner it wears' (*1 Henry IV* 2. 4. 408—10). Thomas Diafoirus (to Angélique): 'Mademoiselle, ne plus ne moins que le statue de Memnon rendait un son harmonieux lorsqu'elle venait à être

éclairée des rayons du soleil, tout de même me sens-je animé d'un doux transport à l'apparition du soleil de vos beautés; et, comme les naturalistes remarquent que la fleur nommée héliotrope tourne sans cesse vers cet astre du jour, aussi mon cœur dores-en-avant tournera-t-il toujours vers les astres resplendissants de vos yeux adorables, ainsi que vers son pôle unique' (*Malade Imaginaire* 2. 6).]

(B) From deception. [This category overlaps with that of (E) 'the unexpected,' since every ludicrous accident to which an author carefully leads up with a view to surprising us into laughter has the nature of a deception; and similarly the outcome of deception is unexpected. Deception may be said to govern the plot of the *Birds*, which is an elaborate lie (Men are birds); the poet cheats us into accepting the falsehood through a gradual, yet swift, transition from what is more credible to what is less, and through an accumulation of circumstances that would result if the primary assumption were true. Similarly in the *Frogs* the poet cheats us into expecting that Dionysus will bring back Euripides, and by a sudden turn at the end makes him bring back Aeschylus instead. Still, we must differentiate between surprise and deception, as also between laughter arising from deception in regard to things and the deception illustrated by jests on words. Aristotle speaks of the deceptive element in verbal jests such as are produced by an unexpected change of a letter (see above, p. 146); but this appertains to λείζιζ. In the same connection, however, he gives an example of a jocular deception involving πράγματτα: "Statelily stapt he along, and under his feet were his — chilblains." — The anticipated word was "sandals." But the category of laughter arising from deceit may preferably include things of greater moment — deeds, schemes, disguises. It was Homer who taught those who came after how a lie should be represented (see above, p. 217); the crafty Odysseus, with his many wiles, became very useful to the comic poets. And impostors, pretenders, quacks, disguised lovers — any sort of person in

Things:
(B) deception

disguise, any one affecting to be other than himself — are similarly useful; likewise the scheming slaves and servants of Menander, Plautus, Terence, and all modern comedy. Instances are the following: Falstaff disguised as Mother Prat (*Merry Wives* 4. 2); Sir Hugh Evans, disguised, and others disguised as Fairies, and Falstaff disguised as Herne, with a buck's head on (*ibid.* 5. 5); Feste disguised as Sir Topas the curate (*Twelfth Night* 4. 2); Toinette disguised as physician (*Malade Imaginaire* 3. 14); Covielle disguised as interpreter, and Cléonte 'en Turc' (*Bourgeois Gentilhomme* 4. 6). The entire plot of *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac* illustrates laughter through deceit, with Sbrigani as main agent and the Limousin as chief victim. Starkie (*Acharnians*, pp. lxiii-lxiv) notes the following in Aristophanes: Pseudartabas ('Shamartabas') and his companions (*Acharnians* 65 ff.); the Megarian bringing his two little girls to market as pigs, and for sale (*ibid.* 764 ff.); the 'baby girl' that turns out to be a leathern bottle (*Thesmophoriazusae* 733 ff.). To this last Starkie finds a parallel in 1 *Henry IV* 5. 3. 48-55. Prince: 'I prithee, lend me thy sword.' Falstaff: 'Nay, before God, Hal, if Percy be alive, thou gett'st not my sword; but take my pistol, if thou wilt.' Prince: 'Give it me. What! is it in the case?' Falstaff: 'Ay, Hal; 't is hot, 'tis hot: there's that will sack a city.' (The prince draws out a bottle of sack.) Prince: 'What! is 't a time to jest and dally now?' (Throws it at him, and *exit*.) The example of laughter through deceit preserved by Tzetzes (below, p. 289) is the case of Strepsiades, who was taken in by the account of the disciple regarding Socrates' method of estimating the leap of the flea; the method itself, as described, is an instance under another head (see below, pp. 247-8).]

Things:
(C) the im-
possible

(C) From the impossible. [The impossible (irrational, unintelligible, violating the laws of natural sequence, especially that of cause and effect) may be used for comic purposes, and it is then to be distinguished from the unintentional lapses to which any author, comic or not, is exposed. There is, for example, a real

inconsistency in the *Clouds* as we have the play; for in line 142 Socrates is represented as within, measuring the distance skipped by a flea, while in lines 217 ff. he is seen to have been outside, and above, engaged in 'treading the air and contemplating the sun.' It has been suggested (cf. Starkie, *Clouds*, p. 45, note on line 152) that the inconsistency may be due, not to carelessness on the part of Aristophanes, but to later imperfect 'contamination' of the two editions of the play. On the other hand, Socrates' 'I tread the air, and look down on the sun' (Starkie's rendering) is a case of true comic impossibility. So also the building of Cloudecuckoo-town with its massive walls, midway between heaven and earth (*Birds* 1124 ff.); and the resulting blockade of the gods, what they suffer from it, and the embassy they send to Peisthetaerus in order to make terms (*ibid.* 1565 ff.), are equally irrational (= 'impossible'). 'Impossible,' too, are the encounter of Dionysus and Xanthias with the dead man, and their attempt to strike a bargain with him as carrier (*Frogs* 170-8); the ascent of Trygaeus to heaven on his Pegasus, the beetle (*Peace* 154-81). Lucian's *True History* abounds in comic impossibilities, giving rise to many imitations in subsequent writers — as in Swift's *Voyage to Laputa*. With the category in the Tractate compare also the following. 'It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God' (Matt. 19. 24). 'Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, . . . blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel' (*ibid.* 23. 23-4). In Molière, when the Constable asks Harpagon, 'Whom do you suspect of this robbery?' the Miser replies: 'Every one; and I wish you to arrest the city and the suburbs' (*L'Avare* 5. 1). Unreason and unintelligibility for the sake of laughter are often employed by Shakespeare. Second Servingman: 'Nay, I knew by his face that there was something in him; he had, sir, a kind of face, methought — I cannot tell how to term it.' First Servingman: 'He had so, looking as it were — would I were hanged but I thought there was more in him than I could think' (*Coriolanus* 4. 5. 161-6).

With this compare the reply of Sganarelle to the imposing argument of the hero in Molière's *Don Juan* 1. 2. : ' Ma foi, j'ai à dire — Je ne sais que dire. . . . Laissez faire ; une autre fois je mettrai mes raisonnements par écrit, pour disputer avec vous.' Again, Dogberry : ' To be a well-favored man is the gift of fortune ; but to write and read comes by nature ' (*Much Ado* 3. 3. 14-6). ' For your writing and reading, let that appear when there is no need of such vanity. You are thought here to be the most senseless and fit man for the constable of the watch ' (*ibid.* 3. 3. 20-3). Dogberry : ' You are to bid any man stand, in the prince's name.' ' How if a ' will not stand ? ' Dogberry : ' Why then, take no note of him, but let him go ; and presently call the rest of the watch together, and thank God you are rid of a knave ' (*ibid.* 3. 3. 25-30). ' Garrulity,' of course, may evince ' impossibility ' (unreason). Bottom (after returning to his normal shape, and awaking) : ' I have had a most rare vision. I have had a dream past the wit of man to say what dream it was ; man is but an ass, if he go about to expound this dream. Methought I was — there is no man can tell what. Methought I was — and methought I had — but man is but a patched fool, if he will offer to say what methought I had. The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report, what my dream was. I will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream ; it shall be called *Bottom's Dream*, because it hath no bottom ' (*MND.* 4. 1. 206-17). The speeches of the Servingmen, Dogberry, and Bottom illustrate also the category of ' disjointed utterance,' when the story ' has no sequence ' (see below, p. 257). Among the cases of ' impossibility ' (unreason) noted by Starkie (*Acharnians*, p. lxxv) are the following. Socrates : ' I should never have solved the riddle if I gazed upon the sky from the nether earth ; for, soothly, perforce the earth draws the moist element in thought. — Such, too, is the law with water-cresses.' Strepsiades : ' What ! does " thought " " draw " " the moist element " into " the water-cresses " ? ' (*Clouds* 231-6.) In the *Birds*

999–1005, Meton the geometer shows his rods for air-surveying, and explains how to square the circle. Later, Iris is threatened with death, although she is immortal (*ibid.* 1221–4). Aristotle furnishes an example of this type of humor in *Physica Auscultatio* 2. 6 (see above, p. 143): ‘If any one should say he had washed himself in vain because the sun was not eclipsed, he would be laughed at, since there is no causal connection between this and that.’]

(D) From the possible and inconsequent. [The possible, but not ‘probable’ or relevant (see above, p. 191), used for comic effect. The category may be termed that of ‘the irrelevant.’ A good case is Dionysus’ attempt to measure the literary value of lines from Aeschylus and Euripides by weighing them in scales (*Frogs* 1365–1410); compare the similar device employed by Irving in his Knickerbocker’s *History of New York*, Book 3, chap. 1, where Governor Van Twiller pronounced that, ‘having carefully counted over the leaves and weighed the books, it was found that one was just as thick and as heavy as the other; therefore it was the final opinion of the court that the accounts were equally balanced; therefore Wandle should give Barent a receipt, and Barent should give Wandle a receipt — and the constable should pay the costs.’ So Rabelais (3. 39, 43) represents Bridoye, that excellent judge, as deciding cases (after hearing the arguments on both sides) by means of dice; for forty years and more Bridoye judged successfully, and then, his eyesight failing, he mistook a throw of four for a five. It is ‘possible’ to measure and judge by such standards, but the process is irrelevant (‘inconsequent’). Futile measurements are the staple in the illustration given by Tzetzes of laughter through ‘deceit’ (see above, p. 244, below, p. 289). As Tzetzes mentions but two of the nine heads under *πράγματα* listed in the Tractate, his second illustration may be one that had become misplaced in the tradition. Strepsiades is deceived; but the story that deceives him belongs here. Disciple: ‘A while ago Socrates asked Chaeremon how many of its own feet a flea had

Things:
(D) the possible and
inconsequent

jumped; for after biting Chaeremon's eyebrow it bounded off to Socrates' head.' Strepsiades: 'How, then, did he measure the leap?' Disciple: 'With the utmost dexterity. He melted some wax, caught the flea, and dipped its feet in the melted wax; when this was cold, the feet were encased in Persian slippers! These he took off, and so he found the distance' (*Clouds* 144-52). The deception lies in Strepsiades' belief that a system of measurement has been described, when the disciple's account is irrelevant. Irrelevance, whether in garrulity or in brief answers, is frequent in comic dialogue. Second Watch: 'If we know him to be a thief, shall we not lay hands on him?' Dogberry: 'Truly, by your office you may; but I think that they that touch pitch will be defiled' (*Much Ado* 3. 3. 53-6). Verges: 'If you hear a child cry in the night, you must call to the nurse and bid her still it.' Second Watch: 'How if the nurse be asleep and will not hear us?' Dogberry: 'Why, then, depart in peace, and let the child wake her with crying; for the ewe that will not hear her lamb when it baes will never answer a calf when he bleats' (*ibid.* 3. 3. 64-71). Touchstone: 'As the ox hath his bow, sir, the horse his curb, and the falcon her bells, so man hath his desires' (*AYL.* 3. 3. 77-9). Polonius: 'This above all: to thine own self be true, And it must follow as the night the day, Thou canst not then be false to any man' (*Hamlet* 1. 3. 77-80). The day does not produce the night; the sequence of cause and effect is really lacking. In the *Clouds*, when Amynias justly demands payment of a debt, the now sophisticated Strepsiades thus puts him off: 'Tell me, do you think that Zeus sends fresh rain each time, or that the sun draws up the same water again from below?' (*Clouds* 1277-81.) The inconsequent reply is a favorite ruse of shifty debtors. Irrelevance, however, is perhaps most frequently to be looked for in extended comic debate, as in the agon of the Aristophanic play. So Aeschylus argues that the terms of the proposed contest are unfair; his own poetry, having survived its author, can not be brought forward in Hades, while that of Euripides

died with him — 'he's got it here to recite' (*Frogs* 866-9). During the argument between the two poets Dionysus interjects irrelevant remarks (*ibid.* 1036-8, 1067-8, 1074-5, 1158-9). Earlier in the play, the explanations of Xanthias and Dionysus, in accounting for their cries under the lash of Aeacus, are irrelevant. Dionysus (receiving a blow): 'Oh, Oh!' Aeacus: 'What is it?' Dionysus: 'I see horsemen.' Aeacus: 'Why do you cry?' Dionysus: 'I smell onions' (*Frogs* 653-4, cf. 644-52). As a last example, take the following. Falstaff: 'By the Lord, thou sayest true, lad. And is not my hostess of the tavern a most sweet wench?' Prince: 'As the honey of Hybla, my old lad of the castle. And is not a buff jerkin a most sweet robe of durance?' Falstaff: 'How now, how now, mad wag! What, in thy quips and thy quiddities? what a plague have I to do with a buff jerkin?' Prince: 'Why, what a pox have I to do with my hostess of the tavern?' (1 *Henry IV* 1. 2. 40-9.)]

(E) From the unexpected. [Deception and surprise are, strictly considered, *the* sources of laughter *par excellence*, and underlie all others. Thus the irrelevant is unexpected, and similarly the impossible, since things normally follow one another in a 'probable' or 'necessary' sequence. Still, we may have a category of the unexpected proper, including simpler forms, and also the strange, the marvelous, the astounding. The marvelous clearly is a distinctive feature of the *Birds*, the *Frogs*, *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, *The Tempest*, and other comedies having the scene laid outside the world of our everyday experience. But to illustrate in detail, laughter is caused at the end of the *Frogs* by the unexpected choice of Dionysus in taking Aeschylus instead of Euripides; by the appearance of Lucas between Sganarelle and Jacqueline as Sganarelle is about to embrace her (*Médecin Malgré Lui* 3. 3); by that of Bottom (just transformed) and Puck amongst the artisans rehearsing (*MND*. 3. 1.); by the speech and song of Ariel, unseen, in *The Tempest*. Aristotle's

Things:
(E) the unexpected

quotation (see above, pp. 146, 243), 'Statelily stept he along, and under his feet were his — chilblains' (where we anticipated *sandals*), illustrates either 'deception' or 'the unexpected.' Other examples of the latter are: 'I, Dionysus, son of — Wine-jar' (*Frogs* 22); 'By Apollo! there is plenty of spirit in women, if — the wine-shop is handy' (*Lysistrata* 465–6); 'Many bold allies will join, good honest men without — barley' (*Plutus* 218–9 — the expected word was *fear*). Starkie (*Acharnians*, p. lxviii) says that 'the most successful surprise in Aristophanes' is the refusal of the dead man to act as carrier for less than two drachmas (in *Frogs* 177): 'Strike me alive if I do!']

Things:
(F) debasing
the personages

(F) From debasing the personages. [That is, more literally, 'fashioning the personages in the direction of the worthless.' There is a difference, says Aristotle in *Poetics* 3 (above, p. 171), between tragedy and comedy, in that 'tragedy tends to represent men as better, and comedy tends to represent them as worse, than the men of the present day.' So Aristophanes makes the Socrates of the *Clouds* worse than the Socrates of reality, and doubtless Ameipsias did likewise with the same character in the *Connus*; but (anticipating the dictum of *Poetics* 5) not worse in any and every way — only ridiculous. The character is distorted, and to some extent lowered, from the truth, yet not painfully so. The present category obviously overlaps with that (A 1, above, p. 240) of 'assimilation to the worse'; but it is more general, since there are other means of lowering a character besides assimilation, and is at the same time more specific, since it is confined to persons. To call Dionysus 'son of Wine-jar' (when we expected *son of Zeus*) is to make him worse than reality. Aristophanes makes the gods he employs as personages worse than they were in tradition; compare his treatment of Heracles, Prometheus, and Iris, in the *Birds*. And he proceeds similarly with men. So Demus, standing for the Athenian people, in the *Knights* (1340 ff.), is old, deaf, and witless; his ears open and close like a sunshade at flattering and unflattering reference to him

by speakers in the Assembly. So not only Socrates and the philosophers and Sophists generally, but statesmen, even Pericles, and Cleon of course, are made ridiculous; and similarly the generals, other comic poets such as Cratinus and Eupolis; likewise tragic poets, Euripides in particular, but also Aeschylus — on occasion even Sophocles, who has been metamorphosed into a sordid old Simonides, and would put to sea on a hurdle if the voyage promised gain (*Peace* 695–9). In the main, however, Aristophanes does not lower what is really exalted, or distort what is in good proportion. In the *Birds*, not Zeus, but minor deities or demigods, as Prometheus, chiefly evoke laughter; the most ridiculous of the deities there presented is the outlandish Triballian. Poseidon appears in the *Birds*, and there and elsewhere we find passing, yet only passing, allusion to Zeus in uncomplimentary terms. Poseidon is not a main figure in the embassy. Nor does Sophocles come forward as a main character in the *Frogs*; Aristophanes significantly lets him alone as unsuited to the comic purpose. The old and traditionally best is unsuited to his ends. In the *Acharnians*, Pericles, still near in point of time, is casually debased, and his statesmanship ridiculed; later, the age of Pericles has become ideal, and it is the next generation of leaders that is mocked. The ‘conservatism’ of Aristophanes is not that of a detached thinker, but that of a comic poet engaged in a dramatic competition, for whom the present is out of joint, distorted, and hence capable of exaggerated distortion. The ideal past is less useful to him — though not useless directly, and indirectly serviceable by providing him with a standard of comparison with the present which he ridicules. In the New Comedy, nearly all the personages are made somewhat worse than the average. Old men have the vices of age, avarice, apprehension, and garrulity, in excess; as the young men are prodigal, lustful, and so on, and the courtesans are worse than the average of their class. But now and then the courtesans, since the class is already below the average, are endowed with certain virtues so that they may be less odious,

and that the comedy may not fail to give pleasure ; just as the intriguing slave, chief agent in the plot, has intelligence, good humor, a measure of fidelity to his master, and the like. The principle of making the agents worse is easily illustrated from comic poets ancient and modern. Molière's treatment of the medical fraternity will supply numerous examples, and so will Shakespeare's clowns and petty officers. Dogberry and Verges are more worthless than are constables and head-boroughs as a rule. Falstaff, descended on one side from the braggart soldier of classical tradition, is worse than the average blusterer ; and, so far as he had an original in history, he has been distorted. The dramatist has lowered him, yet not too far ; Falstaff remains comic. The principle being of wide application, the reader can furnish other illustrations.]

Things :
(G) the use
of clownish
dancing

(G) From the use of clownish (pantomimic) dancing. 'Vulgar' — perhaps even 'clownish' — more than translates *φορτωγή*, which is opposed to the dignified motions of the chorus in tragedy, and hence is about equivalent to 'comic.' Some of the dancing in comedy is beautiful, some ludicrous ; there is much of both sorts (cf. above, pp. 71-4). The present category must include not only the traditional dance of the Old Comedy, the *cordax*, or any dance introduced by the poet for comic effect, but ridiculous dumb-show of every kind, especially that of a rhythmical sort. The Tractate does not specify the indecent *cordax*, coarse and lascivious, that was suggestive of the phallic song and dance from which comedy took its origin. The Athenian would not allow the *cordax* in the Platonic commonwealth (see above, p. 125). Aristophanes prides himself on its absence from the *Clouds* (cf. line 540), but elsewhere employs it, probably in a less offensive way than did his contemporaries ; Dicaeopolis seems to have danced it in his phallic monody (*Acharnians* 263 ff. ; cf. 261-2, and Starkie, p. lxxi). The poet makes use of other dances also, such as the travesty of the Persian military dance in *Thesmophoriazusae* 1175 ff., where the dancing-girl skips (according to the Scythian)

'like a flea on a blanket' (*ibid.* 1180). Again, as Haigh (p. 318) notes, 'the chorus, at the end of the *Wasps*, when encouraging the sons of Carcinus to fresh exertions, bid them "whirl round like tops, and fling their legs up into the sky."' Rogers thus translates the passage (*Wasps* 1516-37):

Come draw we aside, and leave them wide, a roomy and peaceable exercise-ground,

That before us therein like tops they may spin, revolving and whirling and twirling around.

O lofty-titled sons of the ocean-roving sire,

Ye brethern of the shrimps, come and leap

On the sand and on the strand of the salt and barren deep.

Whisk nimble feet around you; kick out, till all admire,

The Phrynichean kick to the sky;

That the audience may applaud, as they view your leg on high.

On, on in mazy circles; hit your stomach with your heel;

Fling legs aloft to heaven, as like spinning-tops you wheel.

Your Sire is creeping onward, the Ruler of the Sea;

He gazes with delight at his hobby-dancers three.

Come, dancing as you are, if you like it, lead away,

For never yet, I warrant, has an actor till to-day

Led out a chorus, dancing, at the ending of the Play.

See also Rogers' admirable rendering of the *Plutus* for the vehement dancing of the chorus in the orchestra, while Cario dances on the stage — a fine instance of 'pleasure' and 'laughter' combined (*Plutus* 288-321). In pantomimic dancing and rhythmical dumb-show, the mechanical regularity imposed upon what is by nature irregular — as the motions of the drunken, or of men engaged in fisticuffs, or the like — is incongruous, and is a source of laughter. The punishment (fillips in cadence) meted out to Polichinelle in *Le Malade Imaginaire*, *Premier Intermède*, sc. 8, is an instance: 'Les archers danseurs lui donnent des croquignoles en cadence.' And again (*ibid.*): 'Les archers danseurs lui donnent des coups de bâton en cadence.' Compare *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* 4. 13 (*Troisième Entrée de Ballet*): 'Les Turcs dansants mettent le turban sur le tête de M. Jourdain au son des instruments'; (*Quatrième Entrée de Ballet*): 'Les Turcs dansants donnent en cadence plusieurs coups de sabre à M. Jourdain'; (*Cinquième Entrée de Ballet*): 'Les Turcs dansants

donnent à M. Jourdain des coups de bâton en cadence.' The scene ends with the stage-direction (I translate): 'The Mufti begins a third invocation. The Der-vishes respectfully hold him up beneath the arms; after which the Turks, singing and dancing, leap about the Mufti, withdraw with him, and lead away M. Jourdain.' But in modern comedy perhaps the most striking instance of pantomimic song and dance is the close (*Troisième Intermède*) of *Le Malade Imaginaire*, introduced by these stage-directions: 'C'est une cérémonie burlesque d'un homme qu'on fait médecin en récit, chante, et danse. Plusieurs tapissiers viennent préparer la salle et placer les bancs en cadence. Ensuite de quoi toute l'assemblée, composée de huit porteseringues, six apothicaires, vingt-deux docteurs, et celui qui se fait recevoir médecin, huit chirurgiens dansants, et deux chantants, entrent, et prennent place, chacun selon son rang.' The dancing of Shakespearean comedy is often for 'pleasure' more than for 'laughter'; the statement doubtless holds for romantic comedy in general. So Ariel's Song (*Tempest* I. 2. 375-85): 'Come unto these yellow sands, And then take hands. . . . Foot it feately here and there,' etc.; yet the song closes in the other vein:

Hark, hark!

(*Burden*: Bow, wow, *dispersedly*.)

The watch-dogs bark:

(*Burden*: Bow, wow, *dispersedly*.)

Hark, hark! I hear

The strain of strutting Chanticleer

(*Cry*: Cock-a-diddle-dow.)

A more typical case for the Tractate would be the dance of the 'fairies,' when Falstaff is trapped in Windsor Park (*Merry Wives* 5. 5. 93 ff.), and the dancers are incited to their work by Anne Page as the Fairy Queen:

Corrupt, corrupt, and tainted in desire!

About him, fairies, sing a scornful rime;

And, as you trip, still pinch him to your time.

As commentators on the Tractate at this point have hitherto limited themselves to discussions of the

cordax, one may now add that all modern light opera illustrates Category G; so the 'very loud' chorus of the Pirates in Gilbert and Sullivan (*Pirates of Penzance*, Act 2): 'With cat-like tread Upon our prey we steal; In silence dread Our cautious way we feel.' There is 'vulgar dancing' in the Walpurgisnacht scene of Goethe's *Faust* — 'Faust mit der Jungen tanzend . . . Mephistopheles mit der Alten.' The accompanying words of Mephistopheles are unfit for quotation. The grotesque episode in Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*, Act 2, at the Court of the Dovregubbe in the mountains, where we have dancing, and a hunt of the hero by the Trolls, is familiar through the music of Grieg, *First Peer Gynt Suite*, No. 4, *In the Hall of the Mountain King*. Burns shows his mastery of this type of comic effect in *Tam O'Shanter*; I ask the reader to turn to that poem. 'The unlimited capacities of Greek dancing' are well estimated by Haigh (p. 313): 'The purpose . . . was to represent various objects and events by means of gestures, postures, and attitudes. In this kind of mimicry the nations of southern Europe are particularly skilful, as may be seen at the present day. The art was carried by the Greeks to the highest perfection, and a good dancer was able to accompany a song with such expressive pantomime as to create a visible picture of the things described. Aristotle defines dancing as an imitation of "actions, characters, and passions by means of postures and rhythmical movements"' (*Poetics* I — see above, p. 168).]

(H) When one of those having power, neglecting the greatest things, takes the most worthless. [The point is illustrated by Dionysus' intention to bring back Euripides, when he might, as Heracles reminds him (*Frogs* 76-7), have Sophocles if he chose. Thieves become ludicrous when they pass by things of value, and fasten upon what is trivial. In the *Wasps* 233-9 the aged dicasts lament their prime, 'when we kept the watch together, and stole . . . the baker's tray, and chopped it up to cook our pimpernel withal.' Again (*ibid.* 354-5): 'Don't you remember when, in the cam-

Things:
(H) having
the choice
and taking
the worthless

paign, you stole the spits, and slid down by the wall, when we captured Naxos? ' Cherished memories of trifling adventures, then, come under this head. Justice Shallow: ' The same Sir John, the very same. I saw him break Skogan's head at the court-gate, when a' was a crack not thus high; and the very same day did I fight with one Sampson Stockfish, a fruiterer, behind Gray's Inn. Jesu! Jesu! the mad days that I have spent ' (2 *Henry IV* 3. 2. 31-6). The Boy in *Henry V* 3. 2. 42-5 says of Falstaff's friends: ' They will steal anything and call it purchase. Bardolph stole a lute-case, bore it twelve leagues, and sold it for three halfpence. Nym and Bardolph are sworn brothers in filching, and in Calais they stole a fire-shovel.' In *The Taming of the Shrew*, Induction 2. 5-9, Sly, as ' your lordship ' and ' your honor,' may have a cup of sack, conserves, rich raiment. He replies: ' I am Christophero Sly; call not me honor, nor lordship. I ne'er drank sack in my life; and if you give me any conserves, give me conserves of beef. Ne'er ask me what raiment I'll wear, for I have no more doublets than backs, no more stockings than legs.' Titania gives orders to feed Bottom ' with apricocks and dewberries, with purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries,' and asks if he will hear fairy music. Bottom: ' I have a reasonable good ear in music: let us have the tongs and the bones.' And what will he eat? ' Truly, a peck of provender; I could munch your good dry oats. Methinks I have a great desire to a bottle of hay: good hay, sweet hay, hath no fellow ' (*MND*. 3. 1. 161 ff.; 4. 1. 1 ff.). In Molière, Philaminte prefers the vapid Trissotin for son-in-law rather than the worthy Clitandre (*Femmes Savantes*); M. Jourdain desires ' le fils du Grand Turc ' in the same relation rather than Cléonte (*Bourgeois Gentilhomme*); and Argan chooses Thomas Diafoirus rather than Cléante for his daughter Angélique (*Malade Imaginaire*). ' Under this head,' says Starkie (*Acharnians*, p. lxxii), ' comes bathos, even when confined to a single thought. As the sudden drop causes surprise, many of these instances may be classified under *παρὰ προσδοκίαν* ' (' the unexpected '). Among his examples are the

following. As a disciple of Socrates, Strepsiades would not even 'talk to the other gods' — those of Olympus, — in comparison with the new divinities of Chaos, Clouds, Tongue (*Clouds* 424–5). When his son was a child, Strepsiades yielded to his lisping prayer, and 'spent the very first obol I earned for court-service on a go-cart for you at the fair' (*ibid.* 861–4). In the *Knights* 642–5, the finest piece of news the Sausage-seller can give to the Council is: 'Never since the war broke out have I seen sprats cheaper than now.' In the *Birds* 1683 ff., Heracles gives up his right to the Lady Sovereignty for a dish of thrushes.]

(I) When the story [or 'discourse'] is disjointed, and has no sequence. [I have translated λόγος by 'story' or 'discourse'; one can not be certain what the term here means (see a discussion of it, above, pp. 49–51, 62 n., 211). It means, at least, a single speech in a play. If it covers also the plot of a comedy, there must be limits to the want of sequence in that, since the whole must not be utterly devoid of organic structure. If the law of causality, or of probability, may be violated, while yet suggested, for comic effect, still the poet should rather aim at a seeming than at a real lack of plan. Even that is dangerous in a work of any length. Yet the *Frogs* has struck more than one critic of Aristophanes as not well-jointed, though not less amusing on that account; on its essential unity and coherence, see above pp. 47, 206–7. Rabelais through his actual formlessness gains some advantage perhaps, to offset a part of what he thereby loses. The comic effect of a disjointed story is safer to aim at in shorter pieces like Chaucer's *Tale of Sir Thopas* and Calverley's *The Cock and the Bull*, above all when the author pretends that his work is a fragment. A lack of sequence may be tolerable, and ludicrous, in a farce. When the word λόγος refers, not to a whole comedy regarded as one continuous utterance, but to some part of the work, as a single speech or song of the chorus, or of a character, it is easy to illustrate the point of disjointed discourse. Don Pedro: 'Officers, what offence have these men

Things:
(1) disjointed
stories

done? ' Dogberry: ' Marry, sir, they have committed false report; moreover, they have spoken untruths; secondarily, they are slanders; sixth and lastly, they have belied a lady; thirdly, they have verified unjust things; and to conclude, they are lying knaves.' Don Pedro: ' First, I ask thee what they have done; thirdly, I ask thee what's their offence; sixth and lastly, why they are committed; and, to conclude, what you lay to their charge? ' (*Much Ado* 5. 1. 212-222.) Many examples of garrulity would fall under this head, as well as parodies; and the present category overlaps with those of 'the impossible' and 'the possible and inconsequent.' Bottom's account of his 'vision' (*MND.* 4. 1) is disjointed, as is the talk of the Serving-men in *Coriolanus* 4. 5; Calverley's *The Cock and the Bull* partly so, especially near the close:

Off in three flea skips. *Hactenus*, so far,
 So good, *tam bene*. *Bene, satis, male* —
 Where was I with my trope 'bout one in a quag?
 I did once hitch the syntax into verse:
Verbum personale, a verb personal,
Concordat — Ay, 'agrees,' old Fatchaps — *cum*
Nominativo, with its nominative,
Genere, i' point o' gender, *numero*,
 O' number, *et persona*, and person. *Ut*,
 Instance: *Sol ruit*, down flops sun; *et*, and
Montes umbrantur, out flounce mountains. Pah!
 Excuse me, sir, I think I'm going mad.
 You see the trick on't though, and can yourself
 Continue the discourse *ad libitum*.

Compare the following. Sganarelle (*se levant brusquement*): 'Vous n'entendez point le latin?' Géronte: 'Non.' Sganarelle (*avec enthousiasme*): 'Cabricias, arci thuram, catalamus, singulariter, nominativo, haec musa, la muse, bonus, bona, bonum. Deus sanctus, est-ne oratio latinus? Etiam, oui. Quare? pourquoi? Quia substantivo, et adjectivum, concordat in generi, numerum, et casus' (*Médecin Malgré Lui* 2. 6). The first four words are forged jargon; thereafter Molière travesties the Grammar ('rudiment') of Despautère. (See also 'grammar and syntax,' above, pp. 237-9.)

Parodies of the tragic and lyric poets are common in Aristophanes, as the lyrical imitation, without sequence, in the *Birds* 948–53 (Rogers’ translation). Poet: ‘Yes I’ll depart, and make to the city pretty songs like this:

O thou of the golden throne,
Sing Her, the quivering, shivering;
I came to the plains many-sown,
I came to the snowy, the blowy.
Alalae!’

Disjointed composition may be seen in the verses proffered to the ladies by Trissotin in *Les Femmes Savantes* 3. 2.]

Comedy differs from abuse [λοιδορία], since abuse openly censures the bad qualities attaching to men, whereas comedy employs what is called ‘emphasis’ [? ‘innuendo’]. [This ‘emphasis’ (ἐμφασις) is commonly taken to mean the same thing as Aristotle’s ‘innuendo’ (ὕπονοια) in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (see Kaibel, p. 52, and compare above, pp. 19, 25, 120). The term ‘emphasis’ is found also in late Greek, and hence in Latin, theories of rhetoric (see Volkmann, *Rhetorik der Griechen und Römer*, 1885, pp. 445–6); the orator employs ‘emphasis’ when he has a deeper meaning than his words, taken literally, suggest. But the term may not have just the same sense for comedy. According to the usual interpretation, ‘abuse’ would refer to a characteristic of the Old Comedy, and ‘emphasis’ to a characteristic of the New. But the epitomator has just given an analysis of laughter with a special application to Aristophanes (see the examples in Tzetzes, below, pp. 288–9). Perhaps it would be safer to connect ‘abuse’ with the earlier stages of the Old Comedy (but still more with the iambic invective of Archilochus and Hipponax), and ‘emphasis’ with the later plays of Aristophanes, and with those of his successors who leaned toward the New Comedy. In Aristophanes a good deal of what now counts for ‘abuse’ — at least

Comedy differs from scurrility

with many critics — was not so regarded by the poet and his audience. According to tradition, Socrates left his seat during the performance of the *Clouds*, and stood near enough to the ‘Socrates’ of the play to let the spectators judge the success of the imitation. Aristophanes does not directly abuse Socrates, or the gods, or Aeschylus and Euripides. In his hands the peculiarities of Socrates are heightened so as to produce laughter; the traditional Heracles becomes a buffoon through a process of selection and accentuation of the comic possibilities in the myth; and a similar method of selection and over-stress is employed in order to arouse laughter with Aeschylus and Euripides. Might not the result be a form of ‘emphasis’? It is not certain that the ἔμφασις of the Tractate and the ὑπόνοια of the *Nicomachean Ethics* are identical. On the other hand, that the indirect method is not foreign to Aristophanes may be seen in the *Knights*, where Demus and Paphlagon respectively stand for the people of Athens and the demagogues; not until line 976, and only there, is Cleon mentioned by name. That the same method was employed by Cratinus may be inferred from the usual interpretation of the fragments of his *Nemesis*, in which Zeus and Nemesis are thought to have represented Pericles and Aspasia (cf. Kock i. 47). The titles of many plays of the Old Comedy betray the same tendency to avoid open abuse, and to render ludicrous by indirection — as the *Wasps*, *Frogs*, and *Clouds* of Aristophanes. In the *Birds*, the poet does not openly censure the bad habit of speculation attaching to the Athenians; he employs an indirect form of good-humored ridicule.]

The ludicrous
in mental and
bodily defects

The joker [ὁ σκώπτων] will make game of faults in the soul and in the body. [The word σκώπτων may be applied to a comic poet; Aristotle uses the verb with reference to Aristophanes, Strattis, and Anaxandrides (see above, pp. 156, 158, 31). For Cicero’s statement that both bodily and mental qualities lie within the province of the truly ludicrous, see above, p. 88. The sentiment is doubtless ancient, possibly belonging to early Greek

rhetorical theory as well as to the theory of comedy. With regard to comedy it is a mere truism in view of the actual practice of writers great and small. Aristophanes makes use of the bodily features and also the philosophy and method of teaching of 'Socrates' for laughter in the *Clouds*. In the *Birds* the ridiculous bulk of Heracles as well as his simplicity and gross appetite is represented. Shakespeare makes game of the unwieldy frame not less than the buffoonery of Falstaff. Bottom with an ass's head is as wise as he is beautiful. One might go on to mention Bardolph, Malvolio, and others, if there were any point in extending the list. In *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac* Molière prepares the audience in advance for the ridiculous face and bearing of the hero, and for his qualities as a bombastic dupe, and utilizes both aspects of the character for laughter throughout the play. Similarly the outward form and the dress of Argan, as well as his hypochondria, are employed in *Le Malade Imaginaire*, and the appearance and *ethos* of the miserly Harpagon in *L'Avare*. Perhaps the propriety of laughter at bodily defects was questioned in Greek treatises on poetry, as it has been since. Certain blemishes, however, such as baldness, knock-knees, bandy-legs, lack of an eye, strabismus, do not strike humanity at large as painful; they are like the comic mask, mentioned in the *Poetics* (see above, p. 176) as an example of something ugly, distorted, and ludicrous, without suggesting pain. No doubt there is a limit beyond which the comic poet may not go in representing bodily defects, as there are forms of vice that are excluded from comedy. The obvious results of severe illness would not be suitable for comic treatment, nor would mortal emaciation or frightful scars. But it is hard to draw the line. Extreme emaciation coupled with activity, like extreme corpulence, or any unusual departure from the norm, may be rendered ludicrous. Hunchbacks have often served their turn in comic writers; yet Dickens' Quilp and Hugo's Quasimodo are not strictly comic, but saturnine, with a hint of pain. So long as the suggestion of pain is absent,

**Proportionate
laughter**

As in tragedies there should be a due proportion of fear, so in comedies there should be a due proportion of laughter. [Kayser (pp. 30-1) thinks the statement to be Aristotelian. Bernays (p. 151) interprets thus: As in tragedy a due proportion of fear to pity is demanded, so in comedy a due proportion of laughter to pleasure; in other words, the laughter must be neither that of scurrility nor that of bitter invective. But if we are to extract anything from the passage, perhaps the meaning is that the element of laughter must not be in excess — there must be a sufficient admixture of the pleasing accessories of comedy, such as beautiful language, music, etc. (See above, pp. 71-6.) 'Due proportion' represents the *συμμετρία* of the original.]

**Constituent
parts of com-
edy**

The substance [*ὕλη*] of comedy consists of (1) plot, (2) *ethos*, (3) *dianoia*, (4) diction, (5) melody, (6) spectacle. [See above, pp. 47-53, 182-6.]

Plot

The comic plot [*μῦθος*] is the structure binding together the ludicrous incidents. [Literally, 'is that having the *ὄψεις* concerning laughable acts.' For *μῦθος* see above, pp. 49-51.]

***Ethos* in
comedy:
three types**

The characters [*ἥθη*] of comedy are (1) the buffoonish, (2) the ironical, and (3) those of the impostors. [The three are distinguished by Aristotle in *Nicomachean Ethics* 4. 13-4, but other types that might serve for comedy are likewise there described. Examples of the 'buffoon' in Aristophanes are Dionysus in the *Frogs*, Euelpides in the *Birds*, Strepsiades in the *Clouds*, Philocleon in the *Wasps*, Demus in the *Knights*. In Shakespeare, Polonius, Dogberry, and Bottom are 'buffoons' of several sorts; in Molière, Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, Sganarelle in *Le Festin de Pierre*, and doubtless Sganarelle in *Le Médecin Malgré Lui* — though the last-named is forced into the rôle of 'impostor'; Monsieur Jourdain in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* is fundamentally a 'buffoon,' with leanings toward the type of 'impostor.' Falstaff is an 'im-

**(1) the buf-
foonish**

the 'buffoon.' The latter term, like the other two, is used in a technical sense (see above, pp. 117-9); it must not mislead a defender of Falstaff or the Sganarelle of *Le Médecin Malgré Lui* because of their shrewd wit. Sancho Panza in *Don Quixote* is technically a 'buffoon.' The great example of the 'ironical man' is the Socrates of Plato, with his customary affectation of ignorance. No modern language has an exact equivalent of the Greek εἰρωνεία, though the character is found in modern society; Bishop Stubbs, the historian, was an example; cf. the description in Hutton, *Letters of William Stubbs*, p. 407: 'I think that sometimes he came near displaying what was not real for fear of being tempted into displaying what was.' Comic 'irony' resembles one of the traits of old age; according to Aristotle (*Rhetoric* 2. 13), the old 'are never positive about anything, and always err on the side of too little excess; they "suppose," but never "know" anything; and in discussion they always add "perhaps" or "possibly," expressing themselves invariably in this guarded manner, and never positively.' Says Cornford (pp. 137-8): 'The Buffoon and the *Eiron* are more closely allied in Aristotle's view than a modern reader might expect. . . . It will be remembered that in the *Ethics* the Ironical Man and the Impostor or swaggerer confront one another in the two vicious extremes which flank the virtuous mean of Truthfulness. While the Impostor claims to possess higher qualities than he has, the Ironical Man is given to making himself out worse than he is. This is a generalized description, meant to cover all types of self-depreciation, many forms of which are not comic. In comedy the special kind of irony practised by the Impostor's opponent is feigned stupidity. . . . The *Eiron* who victimizes the Impostors masks his cleverness under a show of clownish dullness. . . . His attitude is precisely expressed by Demus in a passage of cynical and even sinister self-revelation to the Knights, at a moment when the stage is clear of the two impostors who are competing for his favor. In the previous scene Demus has feigned simplicity almost to the point of idiocy, and when the two

(2) The
Ironical

rogues are gone, the chorus reproach him for being so easily deceived by flattery. . . . Demus replies that his wits are safer than those sheltered by the young Knights curled locks. He is letting the rascals feed fat before he gobbles them up: "I play the simpleton like this on purpose." Thus in the concrete character-type as it exists in the Old Comedy, "buffoonery" (βωμολογία) is only the outer wear of "irony"; and the Ironical Buffoon is in exact antithesis to the Impostor, who covers inward cowardice and folly under a vain pretence of bravery and wisdom.' The ironical jester, says Aristotle (above, p. 123), makes fun for his own amusement, the buffoon for the amusement of others. The unmixed Ironical type is not so common as the Buffoons and Impostors, the last being numerous and important in the comedy of all times. In the *Birds* Aristophanes has a motley crew of them. As Cornford notes (p. 135), 'The sacrifice, immediately after the parabasis, attracts a Priest, who is no sooner got rid of than a Poet comes with an ode prepared "long since" for the city that has only just been founded. . . . The next comer, the inevitable Oracle-monger, is discomfited by an oracle, extemporized by Peisthetaerus, which declares in Pythian hexameters that, if an "impostor" comes unbidden, he is to be beaten. This divine command is religiously carried out. The mathematician Meton next appears, armed with an enormous pair of compasses and the scheme of rational town-planning. . . . But he is before his time, and yields to a forcible request to measure himself into the middle of next week. An Inspector, who announces himself as duly appointed by lot to an office in Cloudcuckootown, is beaten; and so is a Hawker of Acts of Parliament, who enters reading aloud extracts from a brand-new constitution for the city.' Then come a young man (Sire-striker), 'attracted by the morality of bird-life, which, as he understands, allows the young to peck and strangle their parents'; Cinesias, the dithyrambic poet, applying 'for nightingale's wings on which to soar in pursuit of inspiration'; and an Informer, who 'seeks wings to

(3) The
impostors

islands of the Athenian empire.' In a later age, the braggart soldier, the deceitful slave, the scheming or pretentious rogue of every description (in the New Greek Comedy, and hence in Plautus and Terence), all belong to this type. As we have seen, Falstaff, the many-sided, is likewise related to it. Molière's *Tartuffe*, 'or the Impostor' (one should put '*the*' in italics) is our chief modern example. But Molière's cohort of medical quacks will go into the same class. Aristotle picks out skill in prophesying or medicine as the kind of excellence to which 'boasters' are likely to pretend (see above, p. 118). Nor may we here forget the chanting *Avocats* in *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac* 2. 13; or Toinette as a nonagenarian doctor in *Le Malade Imaginaire* 3. 14-16; or Sganarelle in *Le Médecin Malgré Lui*, after he is clubbed into the art of healing; or the 'Turks' in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*.]

The parts of *dianoia* are two: (A) opinion and (B) proof. Proofs [or 'persuasions'] are of five sorts: (1) oaths, (2) compacts, (3) testimonies, (4) tortures ['tests' or 'ordeals'], (5) laws. [The division into 'opinion' (γνώμη = Lat. *sententia* = maxim) and 'proof' (πίστις = means of persuasion) corresponds to the dual division of *dianoia* in the *Poetics* (see above, pp. 185, 210); there the intellectual element of tragedy is seen to be composed of general statements (such as maxims) and particular efforts to prove, disprove, magnify, minify, and the like. The word γνώμη in the sense of general statement is common to the *Poetics* and *Rhetoric*. Again, in *Poetics* 16. 1454^b 28-9 'a discovery using signs as a means of assurance' (πίστις) is said to be 'less artistic'; so that πίστις also may be reckoned common to both works in connection with *dianoia*. But in the subdivisions of the Tractate under πίστις the language is like that of *Rhetoric* 1. 2. 1355^b 35-7 and 1. 15. 1375^a 24-5. In the first of these two passages we have the distinction between 'artistic' (ἐντεχνον) means of persuasion (πίστεις) and 'un-artistic' (ἄτεχνον) — that is (the latter), not due to inventive skill in the orator, but supplied to him from

Dianoia in
comedy:
(A) opinion,
(B) proof

without, being already in existence, 'such as witnesses, evidence from tortures, contracts' (μάρτυρες, βάσανοι, συγγραφαί), 'and the like.' They may be used by a speaker in support of argument and assertion. The second passage in the *Rhetoric* contains the five subdivisions of the Tractate, but in a different order: εἰσὶ δὲ πέντε τὸν ἀριθμὸν νόμοι, μάρτυρες, συνθήκαι, βάσανοι, ὅρκος. The Tractate puts 'oaths' (ὅρκοι) first, and 'laws' (νόμοι) last; it offers perhaps a textual correction of the *Rhetoric* in its use of the plural ὅρκοι; it holds to the συνθήκαι ('compacts') of the second passage, rather than the συγγραφαί ('contracts') of the first; and in place of the μάρτυρες ('witnesses') of both passages in the *Rhetoric* it gives us μαρτυρίαι ('witnessings') — a difference that merits attention. Such variations have been taken as the marks of a clumsy adapter trying to cover up his tracks. Bernays (p. 156) censures the Tractate for what he deems its inept draft upon the *Rhetoric*; perhaps he thought that a treatise on comedy should contain hints on the 'artistic' (ἐντεχνος) side of *dianoia*. The general animus against the epitomator has been such that no one, hitherto, has tested this part of his scheme by applying it to Aristophanes. Yet there is something to be said for the epitomator, or for his source. Instead of the weighty maxims (γνώμαι) of tragedy, we find in comedy a more trivial kind of generalization that still must be termed γνώμη; my equivalent here is 'opinion' — Touchstone's 'instance.' May we not, then, expect to find Aristophanes using the more superficial and adventitious kinds of support for argument, the more mechanical means of persuasion and discovery, rather than the well-planned invention characteristic of true eloquence? The word γνώμη, certainly not a rare one in the poet, is at times employed by him as if in a specific sense for comedy. And of the five kinds of πίστις (I refer to the *words*), only συνθήκαι are rare in his extant plays. But the *thing*, the compact, is frequent enough in him (see below, pp. 271–2).]

Dianoia:
(A) opinion

(A) Opinion. [All thought consists of more general, and less general, operations of the mind; the mind is

constantly passing from one kind of thought to the other in either direction; but, logically, we advance in a play from particulars to conclusions. One might therefore begin a study of comic *dianoia* by examining the first few lines of the *Birds*, where Euelpides and Peisthetaerus consult a crow and a jackdaw ('witnesses,' perhaps) as guides in their quest; here is an example of *πίστις*. But let us follow the order of the Tractate, and begin with general statements. In the *Frogs* 1420 ff. (esp. 1423, 1424, 1430, 1435), Dionysus, seeking for the poet who can best advise the city, asks Euripides and Aeschylus each for an 'opinion' (*γνώμη*) of Alcibiades; and each replies with a kind of maxim. Euripides: 'I hate a citizen who by nature is slow to help, and swift to hurt, his fatherland.' Aeschylus: 'Tis best to rear no lion's whelp in the city.' The passage continues as far as line 1465 with a string of oracular utterances elicited from the poets by the god. So in the *Clouds* 156 ff., Chaeremon is reported to have asked Socrates which 'opinion' (*γνώμη*) he held regarding gnats — do they sing through the mouth or through the tail? The 'opinion' of Socrates is distinctly set forth by the Disciple. The answers of the Bachelierus to the questions propounded by the faculty in *Le Malade Imaginaire*, *Troisième Intermède*, are examples of the comic *γνώμη*; thus:

Mihi à docto doctore
 Domandatur causam et rationem quare
 Opium facit dormire.
 A quoi respondeo:
 Quia est in eo
 Virtus dormitiva,
 Cujus est natura
 Sensus assoupire.

This is the first of a series of five. Isolated maxims may occur in comedy as in tragedy; so that of Sganarelle at the opening of Molière's *Don Juan*: 'Quoi que puisse dire Aristote et toute la philosophie, il n'est rien d'égal au tabac.' Or that of Arnolphe in *L'École des Femmes* 2. 4:

Un certain Grec disoit à l' empereur Auguste,
Comme une instruction utile autant que juste,
Que, lorsqu' une aventure en colère nous met,
Nous devons, avant tout, dire notre alphabet,
Afin que dans ce temps la bile se tempère.

So also the famous line 77 in the *Self-Tormentor* of Terence. When Menedemus asks his neighbor Chremes why the latter meddles with concerns that are not his own, Chremes replies: 'Homo sum; humani nil a me alienum puto.' 'I am a man, and naught that is human deem I foreign to me,' would be a sentiment grave enough for tragedy, if we forgot the comic busybody who utters it, and his foolish actions elsewhere in the play; still, the maxims in Menander and Terence tend to be more serious than those of the Old Comedy. In comedy as a whole, however, if isolated 'opinions' are not more frequent than are maxims in tragedy, the characteristic series of 'opinions,' such as we have noted in the *Frogs* and *Le Malade Imaginaire*, demand special attention. Another good case is that of 'Les Maximes du Mariage,' which Arnolphe puts into the hands of Agnès in *L'École des Femmes* 3. 2 to be read aloud; she reads ten, and begins the eleventh, when Arnolphe tells her to finish the rest by herself. Other instances of isolated or accumulated 'opinions' may be gleaned from Falstaff, and from the wisdom of Touchstone, Feste, and the clowns and fools of Shakespeare generally. So Feste's quotation from the Hermit of Prague: 'That that is, is' (*Twelfth Night* 4. 2. 15). And so Dogberry: 'For the ewe that will not hear her lamb when it baes will never answer a calf when he bleats' (*Much Ado* 3. 3. 69-71). And the following. Corin: 'And how like you this shepherd's life, Master Touchstone?' Touchstone: 'Truly, shepherd, in respect of itself, it is a good life; but in respect that it is a shepherd's life, it is naught. In respect that it is solitary, I like it very well; but in respect that it is private, it is a very vile life. Now, in respect it is in the fields, it pleaseth me well; but in respect it is not in the Court, it is tedious. As it is a spare life, look you, it fits my humor well; but as there is no more plenty in it, it

goes much against my stomach. Hast any philosophy in thee, shepherd?' Again, Corin: 'The courtier's hands are perfumed with civet.' Touchstone: ' . . . Civet is of a baser birth than tar, the very uncleanly flux of a cat. Mend the instance, shepherd ' (*AYL.* 3. 2. 11-22, 62-7). The entire episode between Corin and Touchstone is an exchange of 'opinions.' Clown (Feste): 'What is the opinion of Pythagoras concerning wild-fowl?' Malvolio: 'That the soul of our grandam might haply inhabit a bird' (*Twelfth Night* 4. 2. 52 55). Falstaff: 'There is a thing, Harry, which thou hast often heard of, and it is known to many in our land by the name of pitch; this pitch, as ancient writers do report, doth defile; so doth the company thou keepest' (*1 Henry IV* 2. 4. 419-23). Aristotle would term the appeal to the Hermit of Prague, to Pythagoras, and to 'ancient writers,' a citation of 'ancient witnesses,' while the 'many in our land' would in his view be 'recent witnesses' (see above, p. 158). In the speech of Falstaff we have a combination of 'witnesses' with an 'opinion,' as well as the particular inference the Prince is to draw; it is a capital illustration of *dianoia*, considered in its elements and as a whole.]

(B) Proofs [or 'persuasions']. (1) Oaths. [Proof or persuasion has a double aspect, and may be considered in relation to the one who persuades or the one who is persuaded. It may be effected by word or by deed, mental operations being expressed in both ways. Thus one person may try to convince another by an oath, or to learn his identity by an ordeal. 'Oaths' (ὄρκιοι) are chiefly verbal — yet one may swear by motion of the hand or body. Oaths in a general sense (swearing by deities, etc.) are often combined with those of a formal sort. The following examples are varied. Xanthias: 'Cheer up! . . . Spectre's vanished.' Dionysus: 'Swear it (κατόμωσον)!' Xanthias: 'Yes, by Zeus.' Dionysus: 'Swear it again.' Xanthias: 'By Zeus.' Dionysus: 'Swear' (ὀμωσον). Xanthias: 'By Zeus' (*Frogs* 302-6). Further on, Dionysus persuades the reluctant Xanthias to reassume the lion-skin: 'But if I

Dianoia:
(B) proofs, or
'persuasions':
five sorts

* Persuasions':
(1) oaths

take it from you again, perdition seize me, my wife, my children, and, worst of all, blear-eyed Archidemus.' Xanthias: 'I accept the oath (ὅρκον), and on those terms I take it' (*ibid.* 586-9). Compare the 'oath' with which the birds ratify their 'compact' (διαθήκη) with Peisthetaerus (*Birds* 439, 444-7). Chorus: 'I make the compact' (διατίθεμαι). Peisthetaerus: 'Now swear these things to me.' Chorus: 'I swear (ὀμνῶ) on these terms: so may I win the prize by the vote of all the judges and all the spectators.' Peisthetaerus: 'So be it!' Chorus: 'And if I break the compact, so may I win by but a single vote.' It is readily seen that several forms of proof or persuasion may be used conjointly. In *Lysistrata* 183 ff., the women make a compact to abstain from all relations with the men until the men effect a peace between Athens and Sparta, and they take an oath to carry out this plan of the heroine; the question comes up again in the attempt of Cinesias to woo his wife Myrrhina, which is in the nature of a 'test' or 'ordeal'; in repulsing her husband the wife cites the 'oath' (*ibid.* 914) — and her argument is successful. The preceding are formal oaths. As to the more general sense (swearing by Apollo, Zeus, Heracles, Poseidon, and the like), it is clear that the mental processes of speakers in Aristophanic comedy are often displayed in such forms of expression. Since comedy employs a popular diction, it contains more of them than does the elevated language of tragedy. It also contains strange and unexpected oaths; compare Jonson's Bobadil (*Every Man in his Humor* 2. 2. 2-3): 'Speak to him? Away! By the foot of Pharaoh, you shall not; you shall not do him that grace!' Or take the case of Falstaff enforcing his assertion regarding the men who deprived him of his booty. Falstaff: 'These four came all a-front, and mainly thrust at me. I made me no more ado but took all their seven points in my target, thus.' Prince: 'Seven? Why, there were but four even now.' Falstaff: 'In buckram.' Poins: 'Ay, four, in buckram suits.' Falstaff: 'Seven, by these hilts, or I am a villain else' (*1 Henry IV* 2. 4. 202-8). Compare also the oaths of Bob Acres in Sheri-

dan (*Rivals* 2. 1. 172-3, 190-1, 213-4): 'Odd's whips and wheels! I've traveled like a comet'; 'Odd's blushes and blooms! She has been as healthy as the German Spa'; 'Merry! Odd's crickets! She has been the belle and spirit of the company wherever she has been.' In the closing ceremony of *Le Malade Imaginaire* the Bachelierus undergoes a 'test' or 'ordeal' which he successfully passes by giving satisfactory 'opinions'; finally he is called upon to swear, formally, and thrice, that he will maintain the established traditions of medicine, no matter what the outcome for the patient. Grimarest avers that Molière, who acted the part of the Bachelierus, had the fatal seizure leading to his death, at the very moment of pronouncing the word '*Juro.*' This 'oath' is followed by a 'compact' ratified by the Praeses.]

(2) Compacts. [The term συνθήκη ('compact,' 'treaty') occurs but twice in the extant plays of Aristophanes (both times in the plural), namely, in *Lysistrata* 1268 and *Peace* 1065, in each case referring to the conclusion of peace between Athens and Sparta which is the desideratum in these comedies. The word is not used to indicate those compacts which often exercise the intellect (*dianoia*) of some chief personage in a comedy, about which not a little of the discussion revolves, and to which the Tractate doubtless alludes. Once (out of three occurrences), διαθήκη is used in this sense — as we have seen, in *Birds* 439, where the treaty with Peisthetaerus is on the point of being ratified by the chorus. The poet's liking for the notion, however, is shown by his frequent use of σπονδή ('libation') and σπονδαί ('treaty'). No reader of the *Acharnians*, *Lysistrata*, and *Peace* needs a reminder of Aristophanes' preoccupation with treaties of peace. As for the Tractate, we may suppose that 'compact,' like other technical terms, has both a more general, and a more special, application. The general sense is exemplified by the three plays just mentioned. And, to judge from the illustrations, both general and special, *dianoia* is shown by persons of the drama in arguing *for*, as well

'Persuasions':
(2) compacts

as *from*, 'compacts'; we are here dealing, not with Rhetoric and an oration or legal argument, but with the tissue of life as represented on the comic stage — not merely with the citation of oaths, compacts, witnesses, ordeals, and laws from the past, but with the genesis and growth of such things before our eyes. Peisthetærus argues *for* the compact with the birds until it is ratified; it is then carried into action, and thereafter he argues *from* it. The agreement to found Cloudcuckootown, accordingly, is an instance of the technical sort. Such, too, are the compact between the hero and the envoys from the gods at the climax of the play; the compact between Praxagora and the other women in the *Ecclesiazusae* to assume the political activities of the men; the compact between Lysistrata and her fellows to withhold themselves from relations with their husbands; the compact between Chremylus and Wealth in the *Plutus*; and (not to exhaust the examples from Aristophanes) the compact of Euripides in the *Thesmophoriazusae* never again to abuse women in his plays. Euripides (in the style of an enemy herald): 'Ladies, if you will make a truce (σπονδάς) with me, now and for evermore, I promise that henceforward you shall never hear one evil word from me. Such are my terms.' Chorus: 'What is the object in proposing this?' Euripides: 'This poor old relative of mine, now fastened to the plank — if you will let me take him safe away, then nevermore will I traduce you. But if you will not yield to my persuasion, then what you do at home in secret will be my story to your husbands when they return from the campaign.' Chorus: 'As touching us, be it known to you that we are by you persuaded. As for this Scythian, do you yourself persuade him' (*Thesmophoriazusae* 1160–71). From Aristophanes and the Middle Comedy, the 'compact' passed into Menander and the New, later reappearing — for example, in the *Self-Tormentor* of Terence — in agreements between a young man and a household slave to persuade or deceive a father, or the like; it is related to the 'stratagems' that are so frequently employed by the personages of Molière — see, for

example, those of Mascarille in *L'Étourdi* 1. 2, etc., repeatedly devised for his master, and as often foiled by the latter's stupidity and ill luck. Modern examples of the 'compact' are seen in the scheme for drawing Beatrice and Benedick from enmity into love (*Much Ado* 2. 1 ff.); and in the agreement between the Prince and Falstaff, Poins, Gadshill, and the others, to rob the travelers, and between the Prince and Poins to frighten Falstaff and the others from the booty (1 *Henry IV* 1. 2). The language at one point (*ibid.* 1. 2. 149-54) clearly evinces *dianoia*. Poins: 'Sir John, I prithee, leave the prince and me alone; I will lay him down such reasons for this adventure that he shall go.' Falstaff: 'Well, God give thee the spirit of persuasion and him the ears of profiting, that what thou speakest may move, and what he hears may be believed.' See also the compact between Sganarelle as doctor and Léandre as apothecary, in *Le Médecin Malgré Lui* 2. 9; that between Béralde, Angélique, Cléante, and Toinette, in *Le Malade Imaginaire* 3. 23; and the elaborate scheme entered into by Julie, Eraste, Nérine, and Sbrigani, for the undoing of the hero, in *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac* 1. 3, 4. I will end this list of examples with a reference to Dekker's *Satiromastix* 5. 2. 297-393, in which Horace (= Ben Jonson) is forced to make a compact with his enemies something like the one Euripides makes with the women in the *Thesmophoriazusae*. It begins with a speech of Crispinus: 'Sir Vaughan, will you minister their oath?' Next we have the terms of the agreement. Sir Vaughan: 'You shall swear not to bumbast out a new play with the olde lynings of jestes, stolne from the Temples Revels,' etc. 'Sweare all this, by Apollo and the eight or nine Muses.' Horace: 'By Apollo, Helicon, the Muses (who march three and three in a rancke), and by all that belongs to Pernassus, I swear all this.' Tucca: 'Beare witnes.' Under the present head we regard these schemes and compacts, not in relation to 'plot,' but in the light of *dianoia* — as exercising the reason of the agents, and as displayed in their uttered arguments.]

(3) Testimonies. [In both lists of 'unartistic proofs' as given by Aristotle in the *Rhetoric* (see above, p. 265-6)

'Persuasions':
(3) testimonies

we have the word *μάρτυρες* ('witnesses'). In the Tractate we have the abstract word *μαρτυρία* ('testimonies' or 'witnessings'), which would include not only 'ancient' and 'recent' witnesses cited in an argument, but also the spontaneous offer of testimony by a character in a play as a means of persuasion, or even the clamor for it. Conrade: 'Away! you are an ass; you are an ass.' Dogberry: 'Dost thou not suspect my place? Dost thou not suspect my years? O that he (Sexton) were here to write me down an ass! But, masters, remember that I am an ass. . . . No, thou villain, thou art full of piety, as shall be proved upon thee by good witness. . . . Bring him away. O that I had been writ down an ass!' (*Much Ado* 4. 2. 74-88.) The personages of Aristophanes are much given to 'witnessing' and 'calling to witness.' When Peisthetaerus maltreats the Inspector, the latter cries: 'I call to witness that I, an Inspector, am struck!' (*Birds* 1029-31.) In like manner, when Dionysus strips Xanthias of the lion-skin, the slave bawls out: 'I call to witness, and appeal to the gods!' (*Frogs* 526-9); but the 'persuasion' is unavailing. Of the formal summons there is a good comic instance in *Wasps* 935 ff. (esp. 936-7), where Bdelycleon for the defence calls the kitchen-utensils that were present on the occasion of the alleged theft by Labes of the cheese. Bdelycleon: 'I summon the witnesses. Witnesses for Labes stand forth! Bowl, Pestle, Cheese-grater, Brazier, Pipkin, and the other well-scorched vessels!' In *Clouds* 1221-5, Pasion, desiring a repayment justly due him, summons Strepsiades, who, with a quibble, exclaims: 'I call to witness that he named two days!' The use of evidence by witness for purposes of discovery, persuasion, and the like, is illustrated in Molière as follows. In *Tartuffe* 4. 4, 5, Orgon is placed in hiding so that he may observe the attempt of the dissembler upon Orgon's wife Elmire. In *Le Malade Imaginaire* 2. 11, Argan forces his little daughter Louison to bear witness as to the endearments that have passed between her sister and Cléante, the evidence being given after 'torture'; and Toinette, having induced Argan

to counterfeit death, makes him a witness of the heartlessness of his wife and the fidelity of his daughter Angélique (*ibid.* 3. 16–21). In *Le Médecin Malgré Lui* 3. 3, Lucas is a witness of the knavery of Sganarelle. In *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac* (2. 2.) the doctor testifies to the ill health of the hero, convincing Oronte; (2. 3) Sbrigani, disguised as a Flemish merchant, testifies to the hero's debts and his design to rehabilitate himself by a rich marriage; and (2. 8–10) Nérine and Lucette in disguise, with the children, give evidence of his alleged bigamy. The speeches exemplify this division of *dianoia*. In *Twelfth Night* 4. 2, Shakespeare makes the Clown, in the guise of Sir Topas, a witness of Malvolio's alleged insanity. The song of Ariel ('Full fathom five') in *The Tempest* 1. 2. 394–400 bears witness to Ferdinand concerning the supposed death of his father. The Prince and Poin are witnesses to the flight of Falstaff from the booty he has taken (1 *Henry IV* 2. 4. 255–67). Prince: 'We two saw you four set on four, and you bound them, and were masters of their wealth. Mark, now, how a plain tale shall put you down. Then did we two set on you four, and, with a word, out-faced you from your prize, and have it; yea, and can show it you here in the house. And, Falstaff, you carried your guts away as nimbly, with as quick dexterity, and roared for mercy, and still ran and roared, as ever I heard bull-calf. What a slave art thou, to hack thy sword as thou hast done, and then say it was in fight! What trick, what device, what starting-hole, canst thou now find out to hide thee from this open and apparent shame?' He asks Falstaff for an exhibition of *dianoia*; Falstaff gives it with an 'oath,' adding an 'opinion' (*ibid.* 2. 4. 270–5): 'By the Lord, I knew ye as well as he that made ye. . . . The lion will not touch the true prince.']

(4) Tests. [The usual translation of βάσανοι is 'tortures'; but for comedy the term embraces ordeals (mental as well as physical), forcible inquisitions, systematic tests of every sort, yet particularly those of a mechanical nature, as may be inferred from the

*Persuasions
(4) tests or
ordeals

primary meaning of βάσανος, that is, *touchstone*. A satisfactory rendering of the word βάσανοι in the Tractate would combine the notions of 'torture' (such as mock-floggings), decisions by mock-combat, tests (as of poetry by weight and measure), and, on the mental side, persistent inquiries and mock-examinations (as that of the Bachelierus in *Le Malade Imaginaire*). Sharp mental inquisitions naturally form a part of the literary technique in the Platonic dialogue; Plato systematically introduces them for comic effect, as in the *Protagoras* and the *Phaedrus*, and even in the *Apology*. Excellent examples are found in Book I of the *Republic* and in the *Ion*. But in general, perhaps, the 'ordeal' tends rather to be of a physical sort, or at least to involve the use of material objects and instruments, such as the scales of Wouter Van Twiller and the dice of Bridoye (see above, p. 247), or the cart-wheel described at the end of the *Summoner's Tale* in Chaucer. The noun βάσανοι in the Tractate corresponds to the frequently occurring verb βασανίζειν in Aristophanes, who uses the noun but twice (*Thesmophoriazusae* 800, 801). The nine occurrences of the verb in the *Frogs* (616, 618, 625, 629, 642, 802, 1121, 1123, 1367 — cf. also βασανίστρια, 826) tend to show the range of meaning. Take the first five. Xanthias (in the disguise of Dionysus = 'Heracles,' beginning with an 'oath,' and offering a 'compact'): 'By Zeus, now! If ever I was here before, or stole a hair's worth of your goods, let me perish. And I'll make you a right noble offer. Take this lad of mine, and torture (βασάνιζε) him; and if you find me guilty, then lead him off to death.' Aeacus: 'And how shall I torture (βασανίσω) him?' Xanthias: 'In every way. Bind him to the rack; hang, flog, and flay him; and then pour vinegar in his nostrils and pile bricks on his chest. And do all else this side of whipping the wretch with an onion or a tender leek.' Aeacus: 'A fair proposal. And if I maim the lad in striking him, I'll pay you what he's worth.' Xanthias: 'I don't ask that; just take him off and torture (βασάνιζε) him.' Aeacus: 'I'll do it here, that you may be eye-witness to his confession.'

To Dionysus in the garb of Xanthias: 'Now then, my boy, put down the traps, and mind you tell no falsehood!' Dionysus: 'I charge you not to torture (βασανίζειν) me, a god immortal!' All this, and more, is introductory to the 'ordeal' proper, in which Aeacus with alternate blows seeks to draw an unambiguous cry from the one who is not divine (*Frogs* 641-66), and which begins with Aeacus' command, 'Now strip!' and Xanthias' question, 'How can you test (βασανίζει) us fairly?' The 'ordeal' ends with the inquisitor's confession of failure: 'No, by Demeter! I can't find out which one of you is god.' The other four occurrences of the verb have to do with the contest between the tragic poets, of which we begin to learn in the middle of the play. Aeacus has heard that poetry will be measured in a balance. Xanthias: 'What! Will they weigh out tragedy like mutton?' Aeacus: 'They are going to bring levels, and foot-rules for words, and oblong forms' — Xanthias: 'To make bricks?' Aeacus: '— and compasses and wedges; for Euripides declares he'll test (βασανίζειν) the tragedies word by word' (*ibid.* 797-802). At length we come to the great examination. Euripides (addressing Aeschylus): 'Now then, I'll turn to your very prologues, so that first of all I may test (βασανίσω) the opening part of the worthy poet's tragic play; for he is obscure in his statement of the facts.' Dionysus: 'And which of his plays will you test (βασανίζει)?' Euripides: 'Full many. But first of all read me the prologue from the *Oresteia*.' Dionysus: 'Come, let every one keep silence. Read, Aeschylus!' Aeschylus: "'O Hermes of the nether world,'" etc. (*ibid.* 1119-26). Lastly (*ibid.* 1364-1419), we have the actual weighing in the scales. Dionysus: 'That's enough for the odes.' Aeschylus: 'Content; for now I wish to bring him to the scales, and that alone will show the choice between us two in the poetic art. I will test (βασανίσω) the weight respectively of our words.' Dionysus: 'Come hither both, since I must needs weigh out like cheese the art of doughty poets' (*ibid.* 1364-9). There is a test or inquisition, with a threat of torture, in *Acharnians* 110 ff., when Dicae-

opolis cross-questions Pseudartabas. 'You get away!' he tells the Ambassador; 'I'll test (βαρυνῶ) this man alone.' Another case is found in the speech of Philocleon and the notes which Bdelycleon makes upon it in writing (*Wasps* 521 ff., esp. 547), with the chorus as umpires in the dispute. Yet another is the test proposed by the Sausage-seller in the *Knights* 1209 ff. in order to let the audience think that Demus has discrimination: Demus must pry into the Sausage-seller's hamper (which turns out to be empty), and then into Paphlagon's (which is discovered to be full of dainties); see especially line 1212. We have a mental ordeal or inquisition in *Lysistrata* 476 ff., when the men examine the women as to the reason why the latter have seized the Acropolis; and a physical ordeal (*ibid.* 872 ff.), in which Myrrhina tantalizes Cinesias. In the *Thesmophoriazusae* there is sharp and prolonged cross-questioning as to the presence and sex of Mnesilochus, culminating in the discovery of his manhood; see particularly lines 626 ff., beginning with the speech of the First Woman: 'Stand aside, for I will test (βαρυνῶ) her from the rites of last year. . . . Now tell me what was the first thing done in the rites.' Mnesilochus: 'Well then, what came first? We drank.' Woman: 'And after that, what next?' Mnesilochus: 'We drank again.' Woman: 'You heard that from some one. What was the third?' Mnesilochus betrays ignorance, and is trapped. Any important 'test' is well-suited to the comic agon; less notable ones may occur almost anywhere in a play. The presence of the verb βαρυνίζειν is not indispensable; there is no occurrence of it in the *Clouds* or the *Plutus*. Yet as an example of a minor 'test' we have the means accredited to Socrates for estimating the powers of jumping in a flea (see above, pp. 247-8); while the healing of the blind god in the *Plutus* is the central incident of the play, brought about by much persuasion. Turning to modern comedy, we may again note the examination of the Bachelierus in *Le Malade Imaginaire*. In the same play we have the ordeal by which Argan extracts information from Louison, and the test devised by

Toinette when she prevails on Argan to feign death in order to find out how much his wife and daughter love him; these examples were discussed under the head of 'witnesses' (see above, pp. 274-5), but, as we have seen, the categories of the Tractate, like those of the *Poetics*, are not always mutually exclusive — or the devices are constantly uniting to form a whole. The feigned death of Louison in the midst of her ordeal is itself a trial of her father, and a means of persuading him. The flips and strokes administered '*en cadence*' by the guard in *Le Malade Imaginaire*, *Premier Intermède*, constitute an ordeal for Polichinelle, as a result of which he is induced to give the Archers six pistoles — a 'persuasion' with a vengeance! As the entire farce of *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac* is in one way a 'deception' of the hero, so in another way it may be regarded as an 'ordeal' for him, and a 'persuasion' to drive him from the city; yet, in order to be specific, we may instance his pursuit (1. 16) by the medical attendants armed with syringes, while the apothecary confronts him with another. The patient, however, is not induced to take the purge! The literary contest in *Les Femmes Savantes* 3. 2-5, and the transformation of M. Jourdain into a Turk (see especially *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* 4. 13), are likewise 'tests' and 'ordeals.' It is by means of an 'ordeal' that Valère and Lucas (*Médecin Malgré Lui* 1. 6) compel Sganarelle to admit that he is a doctor: '*Ils prennent chacun un bâton, et le frappent.*' Sganarelle: 'Ah! Ah! Ah! messieurs, je suis tout ce qu'il vous plaira.' In 1 *Henry IV* 2. 2 the Prince and Poins subject Falstaff and his companions to the test: 'As they are sharing, the Prince and Poins set upon them. They all run away; and Falstaff, after a blow or two, runs away too, leaving the booty behind.' As Aristotle says of *dianoia* in *Poetics* 19, 'the act must produce its effect without verbal explanation.']

(5) Laws. [Laws are either human or divine. Divine laws include the utterances of oracles; — yet oracles at times may serve as witnesses. There are also laws of birds. Human laws include legal codes,

'Persuasions':
(5) laws

medical dicta, and so on. Almost any general statement proceeding from a notable authority may fall under this head if it has greater cogency than a maxim (γνώμη). When the young scapegrace appears in the *Birds* 1342–57, having heard that in the aerial city the young may maltreat the old, and hungering for its ‘laws,’ Peisthetaerus begins the task of persuading him to withdraw by citing the ‘law’ that when the old stork has reared his young, and they are ready for flight, the young must maintain their father. Later (*ibid.* 1660–6) he cites ‘the law of Solon’ prohibiting bastards from the right of inheritance; therewith he persuades Heracles, the ‘bastard’ son of Zeus, to renounce all claim to possession of the Lady Sovereignty. The law of filial obedience is often appealed to by characters in Aristophanes in their efforts to prove or disprove, to urge or dissuade; see, for example, the long argument in *Clouds* 1399–1447, ending in the query of Pheidippides: ‘But what if by the Worser Reason I prove that it is right to beat my mother?’ There are over fifty references to ‘laws’ (singular and plural) in Dunbar’s *Concordance* of Aristophanes; consult this work for γνώμη also, and for ἔρκος, σπονδαί, μαρτύρομαι, βασιανίζειν, νόμος, and their cognates.¹ The process will throw light on the poet, and will add to one’s confidence in the Tractate. In Molière the law regarding polygamy is invoked against Monsieur de Pourceaugnac (2. 13) by the second Avocat, ‘*chantant fort vite en bredouillant*’ (‘sputtering’):

Si vous consultez nos auteurs,
Législateurs et glossateurs,

¹ Some of these words are common in Greek tragedy, and some are not. Thus νόμος (-οι) occurs 25, 37, and 65 times in Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides respectively; ἔρκος 11, 13, and 36 times; ὄμνυμι 2, 6, and 14 times; συνθήκαι, or σύνδικος (Sophocles), 1, 1, and 6 times; σπονδή (-αι) 3, 2, and 17; μαρτυρεῖν 11, 6, and 5; μαρτυρεσθαι 1, 1, and 6; μάρτυς or μάρτυρ (Euripides) 2, 3, and 11. The frequent occurrence of ‘laws’ and ‘oaths’ in Euripides is not so impressive when we reflect that we have eighteen of his plays, and but eleven of Aristophanes’. It is noteworthy that, while βέσσανοι and cognate words occur but thrice in Sophocles, we have no instances at all in either Aeschylus or Euripides.

Justinian, Papinian,
 Ulpian et Tribonian,
 Fernand, Rebuffe, Jean Imole,
 Paul Castre, Julian, Barthole,
 Josan, Alciat, et Cujas,
 Ce grand homme si capable ;
 La polygamie est un cas,
 Est un cas pendable.

Tartuffe appeals to State law in the last scene but one of the comedy named for him, and apparently with success, only to yield to an order from the Prince a moment later, and to be led away in disgrace. Philaminte discharges Martine (*Femmes Savantes* 2. 6) because the unlucky maid-servant has broken the laws of grammar laid down by Vaugelas, and argues on the strength of those laws against Chrysale, who would protect the girl (*ibid.* 2. 7) for her ability as cook. Chrysale demands :

Qu'importe qu'elle manque aux lois de Vaugelas,
 Pourvu qu'à la cuisine elle ne manque pas ?

But his argument is overborne by his wife and grammatical *νόμος*. *The Comedy of Errors* turns upon the law that any Syracusan found at Ephesus must die ; the Duke cites it, and Aegeon, admitting its cogency, is ready to accept his fate. So much for 'proofs' or 'persuasions' as illustrated in comedy. It will be readily understood that there can be an admixture of a serious kind of *dianoia* — that is, of 'artistic' proofs — in a comic play, and the more so as the play verges toward a more serious type of comedy ; but this is only saying in another way that the Tractate is right in singling out the 'unartistic' proofs as characteristic of speeches in the comic drama.]

The diction of comedy is the common, popular language. The comic poet must endow his personages with his own native idiom, but must endow an alien with the alien idiom. [So the language of Aristophanes is in general pure, limpid, Attic Greek (see above, pp. 36, 92), the language of Terence, however refined,

Diction in
 comedy

is natural Latin, and the language of Molière is straightforward, perspicuous, idiomatic French. (Some allowance must be made for the modifications of diction that are introduced for comic purposes — as in word-play.) Aristophanes endows Lysistrata with his own tongue, and her Spartan ally, Lampito, with forms from the dialect of Sparta. The differences in language mentioned by the Tractate are, for Greek comedy, differences in the Greek dialects. In the *Acharnians*, says Rogers (p. xlv), ‘the speeches of both the Megarian and the Bocotian are seasoned with the dialects in vogue in their respective countries; but Aristophanes was far too great an artist and too shrewd a dramatist to overload their language with the strictest Doric and Aeolic forms, which would be unfamiliar and might be unintelligible to his audience, and would spoil the rhythmical cadence of his verses.’ Molière and Shakespeare observe the same economy in their use of dialect. In *Le Médecin Malgré Lui* the nurse Jacqueline and her husband employ dialectal forms in harmony with their station in life. In *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac* 2. 8, 9, Lucette, pretending to be a Languedocian wife of the hero, and Nérine, pretending to be a wife of his from Picardy, use dialects which the situation makes intelligible enough. In *Le Malade Imaginaire*, *Troisième Intermède*, the bombastic yet simple Latin of the examiners and the Bachelierus is intermixed with French forms that add both to the incongruity and to the intelligibility of the initiation into medicine; moreover, the *Intermède* is a ballet, with music and dancing. The amount of Lingua Franca and ‘Turkish’ in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* might be thought excessive, were the speeches unaccompanied by expressive dumb-show, and were the ‘Turks’ not ‘*chantants et dansants*.’ The Lingua Franca is, however, not unintelligible to a cosmopolitan audience speaking one of the Romance languages. And various dialects of Greece were heard on the streets of Athens in the time of Aristophanes, above all, during the celebration of the City Dionysia, when, according to Aeschines (Haigh, p. 7), the audience in the theatre consisted of the ‘whole Greek nation.’

Shakespeare indulges less in dialect, possibly because of the relative isolation of the English audience from Continental tongues, and because different languages (as well as different dialects of English) were spoken in different parts of Great Britain. Caliban speaks good English, while the Triballian of the *Birds* and the Scythian of the *Thesmophoriazusae* utter a jargon (the Scythian more intelligible than the Triballian). Fluellen (*Henry V* 4. 7) betrays his origin, not by speaking Welsh, but by the broken English of a Welshman. The principle noted in the Tractate may thus by extension include the comic gibberish of the Triballian, of the Scythian, and of Pseudartabas in the *Acharnians*. Compare Rogers' translation (*Birds* 1627-81). Peisthetærus: 'All rests with this Triballian. What say you?' Triballian: 'Me gulna charmi grati Sovranau birdito stori.' Heracles: 'There! he said "Restore her."' Or take *Acharnians* 98-104. Ambassador: 'Now tell the Athenians, Pseudo-Artabas, what the Great King commissioned you to say.' Pseudo-Artabas: 'Ijisti boutti furbiss upde rotti.' Ambassador: 'Do you understand?' Dicaeopolis: 'By Apollo, no not I.' Ambassador: 'He says the King is going to send you gold.' To Pseudo-Artabas: 'Be more distinct and clear about the gold.' Pseudo-Artabas: 'No getti goldi nincompoop Iawny.']

Melody is the province of the art of music; hence it is necessary to take its fundamental rules from that art. [So Aristotle in the *Poetics* (see above, p. 209) sends us to the *Rhetoric* for the technique of dramatic speeches. The technique of music was of great importance to the dramatic poet, who in the flourishing days of the Greek stage was likewise a composer; in our sense, Sophocles and Aristophanes were as much 'musicians' as 'poets'; yet the *Poetics* virtually neglects the subject of music, and is perfunctory in its treatment of the chorus. In the *Politics* (see above, p. 128) the author disclaims a knowledge of music such as one could find in technical treatises, to which he refers.]

Music in
comedy

Spectacle is of great advantage to dramas in supply-

Spectacle in
comedy

ing what is in concord with them. [The remark would apply to the *Frogs* and the *Birds* (see above, pp. 73-4).]

Presence or
absence of
constituent
elements

Plot, diction, and melody, are found in all comedies; *dianoia*, *ethos*, and spectacle in few. [This dubious statement has some relation to a difficult passage in the *Poetics* (6. 1450^a12-5), which is thus rendered in my 'Amplified Version' (p. 23): 'These constitutive elements, accordingly, not a few of the tragic poets, so to speak, have duly employed; for, indeed, every drama must contain certain things that are meant for the eye, as well as the elements of moral disposition, plot, diction, melody, and intellect.' Here the 'so to speak' possibly should be read with the reference to 'spectacle.' In the same chapter (*Poetics* 6. 1450^a23-6) we learn that a tragedy cannot exist without 'plot,' but can without '*ethos*'; that '*ethos*' is rare in the tragic poets after Euripides; and that the defect is not confined to tragic poets. That is, we may suppose, ideally conceived personages, fulfilling all artistic demands — personages out of whose motives the action constantly arises — are rare. Such an opinion would hold true for comedies. The statement of the Tractate regarding *dianoia* and spectacle is hard to understand, and, if ever intelligible, hard to illustrate in view of our limited acquaintance with complete Greek comedies outside of Aristophanes. In the *Plutus*, spectacle doubtless is not so important as in the *Birds*. Perhaps there is less extensive use of ordeals, testimonies, and the like, in the later comedies; yet surely the *Plutus* is rich in 'opinions' on the relative advantages of poverty and wealth. Diction, and some sort of plot, there must be in all comedies as in all tragedies. But what of the melody? According to modern conceptions, this is the one formative element out of the six that can be totally absent from a play. For the Greek drama, the question of the presence or absence of any of the elements would seem to be a matter of more or less, not of absolute exclusion. After the impoverishment of Athens through her reverses in war, the entire choral element became less significant on the stage, and for

reasons of economy the cost of stage-setting dwindled. Why should not 'melody' tend to disappear with 'spectacle'? Still, in Menander we have evidence that music, having slight connection or none with the comedy, continued to be given. The statement of the Tractate is at best difficult to interpret; perhaps one is wiser not to throw out too many suggestions concerning it.]

The [quantitative] parts of comedy are four: (1) prologue, (2) the choral part, (3) episode, (4) exode. The prologue is that portion of a comedy extending as far as the entrance of the chorus. The choral part [choricon] is a song by the chorus when it [the song] is of adequate length. An episode is what lies between two choral songs. The exode is the utterance of the chorus at the end. [This passage has been discussed at length above, pp. 53-9, 198-9.]

Quantitative
parts of comedy

The kinds of comedy are (1) Old, with a superabundance of the laughable; (2) New, which disregards laughter, and tends toward the serious; (3) Middle, which is a mixture of the two. [The allusion to the 'New' comedy may place the source of this part of the Tractate after Aristotle (see above, pp. 12, 26); and yet we know that Aristophanes produced comedies which anticipated the devices of Menander (see above, p. 23). Is it possible that Aristotle invented all three terms, or at all events that they were current in his time? But this is mere conjecture. The three kinds represent not only periods of time — in a rough and general way, — but also tendencies that were present from an early date in Greek comedy: the Tractate does not say that the 'Middle' is intermediate in point of time, but that it is 'a mixture' of the other two. The *Frogs*, perhaps, has 'a superabundance of laughter,' and is of the older type. The tendency of the 'New' toward a more serious vein may be observed in the *Self-Tormentor* of Terence, adapted from Menander. The *Plutus* possibly belongs to the type of 'Middle,' as the *Aeoloscicon* is said to have done, and the *Cocalus* foreshadowed

'Old,' 'New,'
and 'Middle'
Comedy -

Menander. The two divergent tendencies, and the mean in which they approximate each other, are not peculiar to Greek literature, but are universal. In Shakespeare, Falstaff belongs to the 'old' comedy, the *Comedy of Errors* to the 'new,' and *The Tempest* to a region intermediate. All three types are found in Molière; for example, the ceremony at the end of *Le Malade Imaginaire* ('old'), *Amphitryon* ('middle'), and *Tartuffe* or *Le Misanthrope* ('new'). That the 'new,' while tending toward the serious, nevertheless is amusing, and thus duly belongs to the realm of comedy, may be learned from a study of *Tartuffe* — that is, if not on a first, yet on repeated perusal. For a discussion of the terms 'old' and 'new' as used by Aristotle, see above, pp. 19–25.]

JOHN TZETZES ON COMEDY

[Translated from the First Proem to Aristophanes (Kaibel, pp. 17-9); I have omitted the first chapter.]

Comedy is an imitation of an action [that is ridiculous], . . . purgative of emotions, constructive of life, moulded by laughter and pleasure. Tragedy differs from comedy in that tragedy has a story, and a report of things [or 'deeds'] that are past, although it represents them as taking place in the present, but comedy embraces fictions of the affairs of everyday life; and in that the aim of tragedy is to move the hearers to lamentation, while the aim of comedy is to move them to laughter.

And again, according to another differentiation of comedy we have on the one hand the Archaic, on the other the New [, and the Middle¹]. The Old Comedy, then, differs from the New in time, dialect, matter, metre, and equipment. There is a difference in time in that the New was in the days of Alexander, while the Old had its zenith in the days of the Peloponnesian war. There is a difference in dialect in that the New had greater clearness, making use of the new Attic, while the Old had vigor and loftiness of utterance; and sometimes they [the poets of the Old Comedy] invented certain expressions. There is a difference in the matter in that the New . . . , while the Old . . .² There is a difference in metre in that the New for the most part

¹ Meineke deletes, and Kaibel brackets, the phrase.

² Something has been lost from the text; see Kaibel, p. 18, and perhaps pp. 63-4, 68.

employs the iambic measure, and other measures but seldom, while in the Old a multiplicity of metres was the great desideratum. There is a difference in equipment in that in the New there is no necessity of choruses, but in the other they were highly important.

And the Old Comedy itself is not uniform; for they who in Attica first took up the production of comedy (namely Susarion and his fellows) brought in their personages in no definite order, and all they aimed at was to raise a laugh. But when Cratinus came, he first appointed that there should be as many as three personages [? actors] in comedy, putting an end to the lack of arrangement; and to the pleasure of comedy he added profit, attacking evil-doers, and chastising them with comedy as with a public whip. Yet he, too, was allied to the older type, and to a slight degree shared in its want of arrangement. Aristophanes, however, using more art than his contemporaries, reduced comedy to order, and shone pre-eminent among all.

The laughter of comedy arises from diction and things. It arises from diction in seven ways. First, from homonyms, as, for example, διαφοροῦμένοις; for this signifies both *to be at variance* and *gain*. Secondly, from synonyms, as ἔγω and κατέρχομαι ['I come' and 'I arrive' (see *Frogs* 1156-7)]; for they are the same thing. Thirdly, from garrulity, as when any one uses the same word over and over. Fourthly, from paronyms, as when any one using the proper term [for a person or thing] applies it where it does not belong, as, for example, 'I Momax am called Midas.' Fifthly, from diminutives, as 'Dear little Socrates,' 'Dear little Euripides.' Sixthly, from interchange [ἐναλλαγήν], as 'O Lord Bδεῦ!' [Lat. *peditum*] instead of 'O Lord Ζεῦ!' [Zeus]. Seventhly, from

grammar and syntax [— literally, as in the Tractate, above, p. 237, 'from the arrangement of language']. This occurs through the use of the voice or through similar means. [The foregoing statement properly belongs under the treatment of 'interchange' (= 'perversion'); see above, p. 236.] From things done, laughter arises in two ways. First, from deception, as when Strepsiades is persuaded that the story about the flea is true [see above, p. 244]. Secondly, from assimilation; but assimilation is divided in two, either toward the better, as when Xanthias is assimilated to Heracles, or toward the worse, as when Dionysus is assimilated to Xanthias [see above, pp. 240—2].

[Where the Tractate has nine sub-heads under 'things,' Tzetzes has but two. The seeming defect may be due to laziness in an excerptor before Tzetzes. Or the case may be that Tzetzes, or some one from whom he copied, at this point used a source lying in the field of rhetorical theory — that is, not in the direct line of tradition for the theory of comedy. Arndt (pp. 13—4) somewhat doubtfully equates Tzetzes' two sub-heads under 'things' with Cicero's 'fabella vel narratio ficta' (= 'deception') and 'imitatio depravata' (= 'assimilation to the worse') in *De Oratore* 2. 240—3. 'Laughter from clownish dancing' would not find a place in rhetorical theory; and so with the other omitted items. If we do not like the explanation, we may, as Arndt advises, take refuge in the notion of a lazy excerptor.]

APPENDIX

THE FIFTH FORM OF 'DISCOVERY' IN THE *POETICS*

[Reprinted, and adapted, from *Classical Philology* 13, 251-61 (July, 1918) with the kind permission of the Managing-Editor.]

The universal longing for knowledge is the key-note in the philosophy of Aristotle; doubtless the most familiar sentence in his works is the opening maxim of the *Metaphysics*: 'All men by nature desire to know.' The satisfaction of this desire is to him the basic pleasure, not only in the pursuit of science and philosophy, but also in the realm of art, and hence of poetry. When we see a face drawn to the life, the difference between the medium of the artist and the flesh and blood of the living original occasions a moment of suspense — there is a sudden inference as we catch the resemblance, and we exclaim in recognition: 'Why, that is he!' — that is the man we know so well. So, one may add, the hasty reader, snatching at delight, foregoes the cumulative satisfaction to be had from the successive disclosures of a long story, and skips to the end of the book in order to learn at once the main outcome of the whole. Or again, to return to Aristotle, the essential mark of genius in a poet is the ability to discover underlying resemblances in things that are superficially unlike, a power that is shown in his command of figurative language — in similes and the like. And, again, the style that gives the greatest pleasure is the one in which the current diction,

instantly intelligible, is diversified with just the right admixture of strange or rare terms — archaic words and so on. Thus Lincoln said, not 'eighty-seven' years ago, but 'Four score and seven.' The perfection of style is to be clear without being ordinary; an infusion of the less familiar, so long as we do not convert our language into an enigma or a jargon, gives opportunity for a succession of delights arising from the recognition of meanings. Aristotle does not precisely say all this, but I trust no injury has been done to his remarks on diction if we detect in them a latent resemblance to other parts of his theory.

There can at all events be no question as to the importance he attaches to that element in the plot of a drama or an epic poem which he calls 'discovery' (*ἀναγνώρισις*) or, as we sometimes render it, 'recognition.' Like other terms found in the *Poetics*, this may be taken first in a more general sense, and then in a more special or technical sense. Discovery in general is simply a transition from ignorance to knowledge. You may discover the identity of a person, or of your dog Argus, or of inanimate, even casual, things. You may discover the solution of a riddle propounded by the Sphinx. You may discover that such and such a thing has or has not occurred, or that you yourself have or have not done a particular deed. Thus Oedipus discovers, or thinks he discovers, all sorts of things true or untrue — that Creon is plotting against him; that Tiresias is basely involved in the plot; that he, the hero, could not have slain his father and married his mother, fulfilling the oracle, since he discovers that Polybus and Merope have died a natural death; that the dead Polybus and Merope after all were not his parents; that the man he slew at the cross-roads was

his father, and the queen he subsequently married, his mother; that, as Tiresias had said, he himself, Oedipus, is the accursed defiler of the land whom he has been seeking. 'Oedipus' is the real answer to the riddle of the Sphinx: more than other infants, he with the pierced feet went on all fours in the morning of life; he above all went proudly erect at noon; and he it was who in his blindness went with a staff in the night of age. All the while the unfamiliar, as it is added on, is converted into the familiar; the unexpected turns out to be the very thing we were awaiting. The unknown stranger is revealed as the first-born of the house — who must again become a stranger, and yet again seek a familiar home and final resting-place, no longer at outlandish Thebes, but here in the neighborhood of our own Athens, at the grove beloved of his and our poet. And all the while we, with Oedipus, desire further knowledge, and our desire, momentarily baffled, is as constantly satisfied — until the entire plan of Sophocles is unfolded, and we know all. Even when the knowledge is painful, the satisfaction is a satisfaction. And for us, the spectators, the pain is tempered, since we behold it, not in real life, but in an imitation, with a close resemblance to reality (yet with a difference) that keeps us inferring, and saying: 'Ah, so it is — just like human fortune and misfortune as we see them every day!' The story itself, being traditional, is familiar yet old and far away; and it now has an admixture of the strange and rare which only Sophocles could give it. How delightful to learn — to discover fundamental similarity under superficial difference!

So much for 'discovery' in general. More specifically, in the technical sense, a 'discovery' is the

recognition, in the drama or in a tale, of the identity of one or more persons by one or more others. X may know Y, and then Y must learn the identity of X, or the mutual ignorance of both may pass into mutual recognition, causing love or hate, and hence pleasure or pain, to one or both ; but, if the poet or novelist does his work aright, always with pleasure to the man who sees the play or hears the story—the pleasure of inferring and learning. In particular, the poet must let the audience do its own observing and draw its own inferences without too much obvious assistance. In tragedy at least, we do not wish formal proofs of identity, the display of birthmarks, scars, or tokens—necklaces and so on. Nor do we wish a purely artificial declaration from the unknown individual, with no preceding incident to make it necessary. In tragedy, tokens and declarations are the last resort of a feeble or nodding poet, who has forgotten that all men desire to learn by inference, and must not be cheated of the universal satisfaction. They like to fancy themselves wholly responsible for their mental operations ; they do not wish to have their wits insulted.

The various kinds of 'discovery,' in the more technical sense, are, according to Aristotle, six in number. Of these, the first is that brought about by signs or tokens ; the second is the formal declaration ; the third is the one effected by memory, when the occasion stirs a man's emotions, and his display of feeling because of some remembrance reveals who he must be ; and the fourth is that resulting from inference, when one agent in a drama identifies another by a process of reasoning. It is easy to see that these four divisions, and indeed all six, are not mutually exclusive, since, for example, a scar might be subsidiary to a declaration, or serve to

stir a memory ; or a necklace, or a bow, or a garment, might prompt an inference. The fifth kind is the ' synthetic ' (or ' composite,' or fictitious — otherwise fallacious or false, or perhaps ' concocted ') ' discovery,' and is the form I wish specially to examine. The sixth is the best form. In it the identity of the hero is revealed, not by a scar, or by his own declaration, artificially dragged in by the poet, or by his weeping when he hears the tale of his wanderings rehearsed by another, or by an inference made by his long-lost sister ; but through the inevitable sequence of incident after incident in the plot itself. Here the action of the reader's mind follows the very action of the play, and the pleasure of learning the particular identity is but one item in an orderly series, in that passage from ignorance to knowledge which is effected by the work as a whole.

And pleasure, we must recollect, is not a state of being, but a form of action. The right functioning of the mind is pleasure. Pleasure and free activity are convertible terms. Thus the emphasis of the *Poetics* is always laid upon what is rational and orderly. An overplus of delight is experienced when a regular advance from antecedent to consequent finally brings a sudden addition to our knowledge ; when by a rapid, unlabored, logical inference the desire to know the truth is satisfied. All learning is essentially rapid ; the recognition dawns, then comes as a flash of pleasure.

Yet the poet has a use for what is not strictly true and logical. Even the irrational may escape censure if it be made plausible, or comic when comedy is intended. And the marvelous is sweet. It is legitimate also to represent a dramatic character as deceiving himself or another, the poet being aware that it is hard for a man swayed by anger, or fear, or any other powerful emotion,

to see and tell the exact truth. People are always magnifying the things that comfort their self-love, and minifying whatever may ruffle or hurt it. Then there are characters who like to mystify their fellows, as well as those who deceive for some obvious advantage. The poet may on occasion set before us a crafty Odysseus who delights in all manner of wiles. It requires art also to portray the slippery Clytaemnestra, not to mention the lying Lady Macbeth. Superior mental activity as such is ever interesting, and the false inferences of the deceived are not unpleasing, but the reverse, unless they exceed the bounds of the credible. Furthermore, as we have seen, a slight admixture of the strange or rare gives a spice to the known and obvious. In fact, we all like to add a little something in the telling of a tale, with a view to pleasing the neighbor who hears it.

Accordingly, in his remarks on epic poetry Aristotle says (*Poetics* 24. 1460a17-26) :

' That the marvelous is a source of pleasure may be seen by the way in which people add to a story [*προσπιθέμεντες*]; for they always embellish the facts in the belief that it will gratify the listeners. Yet it is Homer above all who has shown the rest how a lie should be told; [in effect: who has shown how a poet ought to represent Odysseus or the like deceiving some other personage.] The essence of the method is the use of a paralogism, as follows. Suppose that whenever A exists or comes to pass, B must exist or occur. Men think, if the consequent B exists, the antecedent A must also; but the inference is illegitimate. For the poet, then, the right method is this: if the antecedent A is untrue, and if there is something else, B, which would necessarily exist or occur if A were true, one must add [*προσθεῖναι*] the B; for, knowing the added detail to be true, we ourselves mentally proceed to the fallacious inference

that the antecedent A is likewise true. We may take an instance from the Bath Scene in the *Odyssey*.¹

That is, one must say the least possible about the A, and keep harping on the B. Turning to the Bath Scene in *Odyssey* 19, we see the force of Aristotle's illustration. Here Odysseus, disguised in rags, wishes to convince Penelope that he, the Beggar, has seen the real Odysseus alive = A, a falsehood. Accordingly, he adds an elaborate and accurate description of the hero's clothing = B. Penelope knows B to be true, since the garments came from her. If A were true, that is, if the Beggar had seen Odysseus, the natural consequence, B, would be a true description of the clothing. From the truth of B, Penelope mistakenly infers the occurrence of A, and believes the Beggar.²

It is interesting to note in detail how Homer makes Odysseus 'add the B'; I give the passage (*Odyssey* 19. 218 ff.) in the translation of Butcher and Lang:

"Tell me what manner of raiment he was clothed in about his body, and what manner of man he was himself, and tell me of his fellows that went with him." Then Odysseus of many counsels answered her saying: "Lady, it is hard for one so long parted from him to tell thee all this, for it is now the twentieth year since he went thither and left my country. Yet even so I will tell thee as I see him in spirit. Goodly Odysseus wore a thick, purple mantle, twofold, which had a brooch fashioned in gold, with a double covering for the pins, and on the face of it was a curious device: a hound in his fore-paws held a dappled fawn, and gazed on it as it writhed. And all men marveled at the workmanship, how, wrought as they were in gold, the hound was gazing on the fawn and strangling it, and the fawn was writhing with his feet and striving to flee. Moreover,

¹ Here and subsequently I follow, with little deviation, my 'Amplified Version' (p. 82).

² *Ibid.*, pp. 82-3.

I marked the shining doublet about his body, as it were the skin of a dried onion, so smooth it was, and glistening as the sun; truly many women looked thereon and wondered. Yet another thing will I tell thee, and do thou ponder it in thy heart. I know not if Odysseus was thus clothed upon at home, or if one of his fellows gave him the raiment as he went on board the swift ship, or even it may be some stranger." . . . So he spake, and in her heart he stirred yet more the desire of weeping, as she knew the certain tokens that Odysseus showed her. So when she had taken her fill of tearful lament, then she answered him, and spake saying: "Now verily, stranger, thou that even before wert held in pity, shalt be dear and honorable in my halls, for it was I who gave him these garments, even such as thou namest, and folded them myself, and brought them from the chamber, and added besides the shining brooch to be his jewel."'

At this point it is well to remember several things. First of all, there are the words *προστιθέντες* and *προσθεῖναι*, used in the sense of 'adding to,' as if putting together truth and falsehood were characteristic of deception. Then, there is the logical term *paralogism* (*παραλογισμός*) employed by Aristotle in the same connection. Again, the stock example of a liar could hardly be any other than Odysseus. Finally, we are to recall that Aristotle remarks in the *Poetics* (24. 1459^b14-5) upon the number of 'discoveries' in the *Odyssey*; the poem is, he says, an example of an involved plot, since there is 'discovery' throughout, and it is a story of character. The incident of the false tidings, just quoted, has in fact the nature of an erroneous recognition effected in the heroine by the disguised hero, and might suggest the title *Ὀδυσσεὺς ψευδάγγελος* referred to by Aristotle in another passage which we are about to examine — save that there it does not fit the case without a textual change in the *Poetics*.

And now we have reached our special topic. The fifth form of 'discovery' described in the *Poetics* has evidently puzzled the commentators. The meaning of the name applied to it, συνθετή, has not been made clear. To translate this by 'composite' does not help very much unless we know the nature of the thing described — a better plan would be to transliterate and say 'synthetic'; and the example supplied by Aristotle from some poem or lay called *Odysseus the False Messenger*, or *Odysseus with the False Tidings*, leaves us very uncertain of our facts. The text is doubtful at two points. Were it not, any translation would still be conjectural, since the reference is too brief, and of the two parties to the 'discovery' we can not be sure who recognizes and who is recognized.

Even so, more light can be thrown on the passage. Bywater, for example, has not done so well with this difficulty as with others in the *Poetics*. But since his masterly edition may fairly be thought to sum up our present knowledge of that work,¹ it may be well to begin with his text and translation of the passage, and to append his note on the meaning of it. Thereupon I shall give, with a few minor changes, the rendering and explanation I reached in my 'Amplified Version'; and I shall then subjoin a few reflections that have subsequently occurred to me.

Bywater reads thus (16. 1455^a12-6):

ἔστιν δὲ τις καὶ συνθετὴ ἐκ παραλογισμοῦ τοῦ θατέρου, οἷον ἐν τῷ Ὀδυσσεὶ τῷ ψευδαγγέλω· τὸ μὲν γὰρ [τὸ] τόξον ἔφη γινώσκειν ὁ οὐχ ἑώρακει, τὸ δὲ ὡς δὴ ἐκείνου ἀναγνωριοῦντος διὰ τούτου ποιῆσαι παραλογισμός.

¹ True in July, 1918; I have since (1921) had opportunity to consult Gudeman's article and translation (the Preface to the latter being dated July, 1920), and shall later refer to the translation; his article and translation are noted in the Bibliography.

For the last word of the passage, following Vahlen he accepts the reading of *ms.* Riccardianus 46, confirmed, he says, by the Arabic version of the *Poetics*, rejecting the better authority of *ms.* Parisinus 1741, which gives παραλογισμόν; and he translates:

'There is, too, a composite Discovery arising from bad reasoning on the side of the other party. An instance of it is in *Ulysses the False Messenger*: he said he should know the bow — which he had not seen; but to suppose from that that he would know it again (as though he had once seen it) was bad reasoning.'

Bywater's note on the passage is this:

'ἐκ παραλογισμοῦ: comp. ^a4 ἐκ συλλογισμοῦ. Vahlen, who connects this directly with συνθετή, supposes the two factors in the Discovery to be a συλλογισμός on the side of the one, and a παραλογισμός on the side of the other, of the two parties: "*quae* [*scil.* ἀναγνώριστις] *ut ex simplici unius ratiocinatione prodire, ita composita esse potest alterius ex syllogismo, paralogismo alterius*" (comp. also the discussion in his *Zur Kritik Aristotelischer Schriften*, p. 16). The illustration, however, from the Ὀδυσσεὺς ψευδάγγελος does not seem to imply anything more than an erroneous inference by one party (παραλογισμός ὁ θατέρου) from some statement made by the other. The reasoning in this instance Aristotle appears to regard as the illogical parallel to that in the *Choephoroe*: just as the recognition of Orestes by Electra came about through a συλλογισμός on her part, so that of A by B, the two personages in the Ὀδυσσεὺς ψευδάγγελος, is supposed to come about through a παραλογισμός on the part of the latter. The fallacy to be found there may have arisen from the ambiguity of the word "know." A having said, "I shall know the bow," B may have taken this to mean that he would "know it again" (ἀναγνωρισῶντος) — which was not true (comp. ὁ οὐχ ἐωράκει). In our ignorance of the play and its plot it is idle to speculate further as to the way in which the actual Discovery may have been worked out in it. The present is one of many passages showing Aristotle's affection for the

forms of logic even when dealing with matters of poetry (see on 16. 1454^{b28}).'¹

Bywater's interpretation here suffers from his neglect to observe that, as chapter 16 of the *Poetics* deals with 'discovery' in the technical sense, and as the examples of the other forms involve the recognition of persons, with or without the use of tokens, so in the illustration of the fifth form what is said of the bow must almost certainly be subsidiary to the recognition of a person. He seems to have been misled, too, by a probably accidental word-echo: γνώσεσθαι — ἀναγνωριῶντος. But here γνῶσεσθαι is an indirect quotation of something uttered by a character in some lay or poem, while ἀναγνωριῶντος is a part of the technical language (cf. ἀναγνώρισις) of the *Poetics*. Furthermore, the whole theory of the treatise, and Aristotle's use in it of the verb ποιεῖν, irresistibly lead one to think of ποιῆσαι as here referring to the activity of the poet. My own rendering of the passage in question is, I hope, clearer, at least to the sort of student I originally had in mind. I preface it only by saying that it assumes the accusative παραλογισμόν to be correct, and with the remark that I translate συνθετή, not by 'composite,' but by 'synthetic' or 'fictitious,' though perhaps 'concocted' would convey the idea:

'Related to discovery by inference is a kind of synthetic [or 'fictitious'] discovery where the poet causes X to be recognized through the false inference of Y [or 'through a logical deception practised by X upon Y']. There is an example of this in *Odysseus with the False Tidings*. Here X says: 'I shall know the bow' (which he had not seen); but that Y should recognize X through this is to represent a false inference [i. e., 'to poetize a paralogism'].

¹ Bywater, pp. 237-8.

I now wish to add these reflections. The word *συνθετή* is here associated with a 'discovery' that is deceptive or false, and with Odysseus, the stock example of success in deceit. The mention of a parallogism, too, instantly reminds us of what Aristotle says concerning Homer and his correct method in the telling of a lie, in a passage where, as we have seen, the example is likewise that of Odysseus effecting a false discovery, and where the notion of lying is that of adding something true to something false (cf. *προσπιθέντες, προσθεῖναι*). 'Composite,' then, may be misleading as a translation of *συνθετή*, which rather expresses the result when the false A and the added B are put together. The Greek adjective, it is true, can hardly have the same force here as in Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound* 686 (*συνθέτους λόγους* = 'lying speeches'); we need some term like 'fictitious' — one with no necessary connotation of what is morally wrongful.

[Gudeman's German translation of the *Poetics* (1921) is based upon a fresh study of the Arabic version. Where we have heretofore read 'know the bow,' he, like Margoliouth (1911), gives, 'string the bow'; I have often tried to identify Aristotle's *Odysseus with the False Tidings* as one of the 'lays' in the *Odyssey* (see my 'Amplified Version,' p. 56). The Arabic version, then, leads us to connect the example with *Odyssey* 21 or some adaptation of it. Gudeman (p. 33) translates:

'Es gibt aber auch eine zusammengesetzte Art der Erkennung, aus dem Fehlschluss des einen (der angeredeten Person), wie zum Beispiel im *Odysseus der Trugbote*. Da behauptete der eine (Odysseus), er allein könne den Bogen spannen und kein anderer. Dies lässt ihn der Dichter nach der Überlieferung sagen; wenn er nun hinzufügt, er werde den Bogen wieder-

‘ And they took Joseph’s coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood ; and they sent the coat of many colors, and they brought it to their father, and said : “ This have we found ; know now whether it be thy son’s coat or no.” And he knew it, and said : “ It is my son’s coat ; an evil beast hath devoured him ; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces.” ’

In other words, the sons supply the B, their father infers the A, and the ‘ concocted discovery ’ is effected by a paralogism. The writer of the story understood a point in his art — ποιῆσαι παραλογισμόν, — and knew how to represent a lie — ψευδῆ λέγειν ὡς δῆ. In fact, he is specially given to using this form of recognition. Potiphar’s wife (Gen. 39. 7–20) caused Potiphar to make a false ‘ discovery ’ by means of Joseph’s garment, which she laid up by her ‘ until his lord came home ’ :

‘ And she spake unto him according to these words, saying : “ The Hebrew servant which thou hast brought unto us came in unto me to mock me. And it came to pass, as I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled out.” And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying, “ After this manner did thy servant to me,” that his wrath was kindled. And Joseph’s master took him, and put him into the prison.’

Joseph himself practised upon his brethren in somewhat similar fashion. After securing grain from him in Egypt, twice they found every man’s money in his sack’s mouth, and on the second occasion the silver cup of the great Egyptian diviner in Benjamin’s sack.

If it be objected that the story in Genesis is historical, and that we should not attribute too much to the originality of the writer, there is an excellent reply in the *Poetics* itself (9. 1451^b29–32) :

'And even if he happens to take a subject from history, he is not the less a poet for that; for there is nothing to hinder certain actual events from possessing the ideal quality of a probable or necessary sequence; and it is by virtue of representing this quality in such events that he is their poet.'

It is obvious that false 'discoveries' are not restricted to a single type. Odysseus describing the garments Penelope had given him is a deceiver. Odysseus describing the nuptial couch to Penelope, who has just tried to deceive him, is in earnest. A mistaken recognition might occur when no deceit was intended by either party. Nevertheless the poet would need to know how to bring it about, and the principle would always be the same — a mistaken inference from the known B to the seemingly necessary antecedent A. The New Comedy of Greece must have been full of incidents turning upon both innocent mistakes and guileful deceptions with regard to identity. It is easy enough to find examples in Plautus and Terence; Chremes' delusion that the courtesan Bacchis is the true love of young Clinia, in the *Self-Tormentor*, will serve as an instance. As for the modern drama, need one mention Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*? I take it that Aristotle's fifth form of discovery is peculiarly well-suited to comedy.

All men by nature desire to know; all like to see good representations of the human mind in action; and nearly all delight to see false inferences well portrayed — if the mystery is finally cleared, and every mistake resolved.

INDEX

[Names and titles included in the Bibliography (above pp. xiv-xxi) are here omitted; for two other cases of omission, see below under 'Aristotle' and 'Poetics.']

- Abraham 234
Abstract of a Comparison between Aristophanes and Menander, Plutarchian 35, 90
Acharmans, Aristophanes' 92, 149 n., 157, 203, 209, 213, 229, 231, 234, 244, 251, 252, 271, 277, 282, 283.
Acharmans, Rogers' edition 39 n., 282, 283
Acharmans, Starkie's edition 6 n., 15 n., 29 n., 234, 235, 240, 242, 244, 246, 250, 252, 256
Achilles 92, 143
'Acidus' 95
Acres, Bob 270
Acropolis 278
Ad Atticum, Cicero's 92 n.
Ad Quintum Fratrem, Cicero's 91 n.
Adrastus 33 n.
Aeacus 197, 207, 210, 249, 276, 277
Aegeon 281
Aegisthus 61, 150, 201
Aegyptus 160 n.
Aeneid, Virgil's 187
Aeolosicon, Aristophanes' 22 n., 23, 24, 157 n., 285
Aeolus 175
Aeschines 282
Aeschylus 15, 21, 23, 24, 27, 30, 48, 103, 106, 125 n., 139, 193-196, 198, 204, 207, 210, 219, 220, 228, 232, 239, 243, 247, 248, 251, 260, 267, 277, 280 n., 301
Aesthetic, Croce's 78-80, 80 n.
- Agathon 222
Agnès 268
Ainslie 80 n.
Ajax 143
Alcaeus 157
Alcestis, Euripides' 86
Alciat 281
Alcibiades 107, 112, 113, 123, 126, 192, 237, 240, 267
Alcidamas 91, 132
Alcinous 204
Alcmaeon 33
Aldus Manutius 39 n., 40
Alexamenus 101
Alexander 237, 287
Alexandria 51, 139
Alexis 31, 150, 151, 160, 192
Alope, Carcinus' 165
Ambassador 278, 283
Ameipsias 28, 105, 106, 151, 157, 160, 250
American Journal of Philology 36 n., 147 n., 160 n.
Amour Médecin, L', Molière's 81, 82 n.
Amphitryon, Molière's 209, 286
Amphitryon, Plautus' 50, 209
'Amplified Version' of the *Poetics*, Cooper's 9 n., 12 n., 40 n., 42 n., 63 n., 166, 284, 296 n., 298, 301-303
Amynias 248
Anacharsis 134
Anaxandrides 26, 30, 31, 34, 34 n., 55, 147, 147 n., 148 n., 151, 159, 160, 160 n., 260
Ancient Rhetorical Theories of the Laughable, Grant's 98, 99, 99 n.

- Andria* 149
Andria, Terence's 35
Anecdota Graeca, Bekker's 150n.
 Angélique 231, 242, 256, 273.
 275
Anima, De, Aristotle's 31, 32,
 133, 134, 134n., 159, 159n.
 Anne Page 254
 Anonymus 27n., 51n.
Antecedents of Hellenistic Comedy, The, Prescott's 71n.
Anthologium, Stobaeus' 116n.
Anthology, Greek 39
 Anti-Atticist 5, 7n., 29, 150,
 150n., 233
 Antipater 149
 Antiphanes 31-33, 33n., 34,
 50, 149n., 151, 160
 Antipholus of Ephesus 197, 205
 Antipholus of Syracuse 197, 205
 Antiphon 161
 Aphrodite 159
 Apollo 250, 270, 273
Apology, Plato's 38, 99n., 103,
 104, 104n., 105, 106, 113,
 124, 157, 231, 240, 276
 Arabic version of the *Poetics*
 299, 301
 Archers 253, 279
 Archibius 105, 158
 Archidemus 270
 Archilochus 21, 97, 193, 259
 Archippus 28, 151, 157n., 159
 Argan 256, 274, 278, 279
 Argas 170
 Argus 291
 Ariel 235, 242, 249, 254, 275
 Aripbrates 126
 Aristides 142
 Aristodemus 114
 Aristophanes (see also *Acharni-ans*, *Aeolosicon*, *Babylonians*, *Birds*, *Clouds*, *Cocalus*, *Daedalus*, *Ecclesiastusae*, *Frogs*, *Knights*, *Lysistrata*, *Peace*, *Plutus*, *Poresis*, *Storks*, *Thes-mophoriazusae*, *Wasps*) 1, 6,
 15-20, 20n., 21-25, 27-32,
 33n., 34-39, 39n., 40, 41, 44,
 48, 49, 49n., 50, 58, 59, 68,
 71-75, 80, 90-92, 98, 102, 103,
 103n., 104-107, 111, 113,
 116n., 121-124, 125n., 126,
 132, 141n., 143, 149n., 150-
 152, 155, 156, 156n., 157,
 157n., 158, 159, 159n., 160,
 161, 169, 171-173, 178, 182,
 185, 187, 189, 191-199, 201-
 203, 205-211, 213, 214, 217,
 219, 221, 223, 228, 229, 232-
 235, 240, 241, 243-245, 248,
 250-252, 257, 259-262, 264,
 266, 270-272, 274, 276, 280,
 280n., 281-285, 287, 288
 Aristophon 142
Aristotelische Aufsätze, Vahlen's
 5
 Aristotle. References to the
 philosopher, as also to his
Poetics, are omitted; but see
Carmina, *Constitution of*
Athens, *De Anima*, *De Caelo*,
De Divinatione, *De Genera-*
tione Animalium, *De Inter-*
pretatione, *De Partibus Ani-*
malium, *De Sensu*, *De Soph-*
isticis Elenchis, *Didascaliae*,
Eudemian Ethics, *Fragmenta*,
Historia Animalium, *Meta-*
physics, *Meteorologica*, *Nico-*
machean Ethics, *On Poets*,
Problems, *Politics*, *Physica*
Ausculatio, *Rhetoric*, *Scolion*,
Topica, *Tractate*
 Aristotle, not the Stagirite, a
 writer on the *Iliad* 127
 Aristotle, not the Stagirite, a
 writer *On Pleonasm* 127
 Aristotle of Cyrene 127
 Aristotles, eight 127
 Arndt 138n., 289
 Arnolphe 267, 268
Art of Poetry, *On the*, Aristotle's,
 not the Stagirite 127
Art of Poetry, Theophrastus' 127
 Arthur 234
Artium Scriptores, Spengel's
 160n.
 Asclepius 196
 Aspasia 260
Ass's Shadow, Archippus' 28,
 159

- As You Like It*, Shakespeare's
 235, 248, 269
 Atellan Comedy 95
 Athenaeus 26n., 101, 101n.
 Athenian, The, in the *Laws* 108,
 109, 127, 252
 Athenians 250
 Athens 25, 35, 39, 75, 91, 105,
 152, 158, 162, 172, 173, 177,
 195, 212, 221, 241, 260, 265,
 270, 271, 282, 284, 292
 Attica 37, 172, 288
 Audry 235
 Augustus Caesar 268
Aulularia, Plautus' 196, 198
Autobiographie, Geschichte der,
 Misch's 1
Autobiography, The, Burr's 1,
 42n.
Avare, L', Molière's 171, 177,
 196, 198, 241, 245, 261
 Avocat, Second 280
 Avocats 265

 Babylon 242
Babylonians, Aristophanes' 29,
 156, 157, 235
 Bacchis 305
 Bachelierus 267, 271, 276, 278,
 282
 Bacon 43
 Bain 77
 'Ballet,' in *L'Amour Médecin*
 81
 Bardolph 240, 256, 261
 Barent 237
 Barthole 281
 Bath Scene 217, 296
 Bdelycleon 274, 278
 Beare 158n.
 Beatrice 273
 Beggar, in the *Odyssey* 296,
 302, 303
 Bekker 30n., 150n.
 Bélise 237, 238
 Bellerophon 242
 Benedict 273
 Benjamin 205, 304
 Bentley 153n., 236
 Béralde 273
 Bergk 157n

 Bernays 10, 10n., 12, 12n.,
 15-19, 42, 262, 266
 Bible 204, 303
 Biottus 33
Birds, Aristophanes' 27, 38,
 40, 41, 50, 52, 61, 71-73, 121,
 157, 187, 191, 195, 196, 199,
 201, 203, 204, 208, 209, 211,
 217, 228, 229, 231-233, 235,
 236, 240-243, 245-247, 249,
 251, 257, 259-262, 264, 267,
 270, 271, 274, 280, 283, 284
 Birds, chorus of 73, 199, 232,
 233, 270
Birds, Rogers' edition 73n.,
 229, 259, 283
 Blass 103n.
 Bob Acres 270
 Bobadil 270
 Boeotia 252
 Boileau 3
 Bonitz 34, 35, 61n.
Book of Homage to Shakespeare,
 Gollancz's 15n.
 Boor, Theophrastian 121
 Boston 75
Botanic Garden, Darwin's 227
 Bottom 229, 235, 237, 241, 242,
 246, 249, 256, 258, 261, 262
Bottom's Dream 246
Bourgeois Gentilhomme, Le, Mo-
 lière's 171, 244, 253, 256, 262,
 265, 279, 282
 Boy, in *Henry V* 240, 256
 Bradley 2
 Brasidas 241
 Brentano 20n.
 Bridoye 247, 276
 Brill 77n.
 Bruns 1
 Brutus 238, 239
 Burns 255
 Burr 1, 42n.
 Butcher 19, 19n., 31, 39, 41, 296
 Byron 189, 215
 Bywater 5, 6n., 10n., 12, 12n.,
 19, 19n., 21n., 22, 22n.,
 23n., 27, 28, 41, 41n., 64,
 64n., 131n., 133, 133n.,
 139n., 143n., 169, 192, 298-300,
 300n., 302, 303

- Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 40n.
 Byzantium 231
- Caelo, De*, Aristotle's 51
 Caesar, Augustus 268
 Caesar, Julius 89, 238, 239
 Calais 256
 Caliban 283
 Callias 158, 161
 Callimachus 156
 Calliope 230
 Calonice 72
 Calverley 238, 257, 258
 Capps 22, 22n.
Captives, Plautus' 212
 Cario 253
Carmen Physicum, Epicharmus' 151
Carmina, Aristotle's 13, 13n., 227
 Castre, Paul 281
 Cercyon 165
 Chabes 231
 Chaeremon 247, 248, 267
Chantecler, Rostand's 208, 240
 Chaos 257
Characters, Theophrastus' 121, 127
 Chares 105, 158
 Chaucer 217, 257, 276
 Chionides 28, 150, 151, 160, 172
Chirones, Cratinus' 157n.
Choephoroe, Aeschylus' 299
 Choerilus 141n., 227
Choral Dancer, On the, Antiphon's 161
 Chorus in *Thesmophoriazusae* 272
 Chremes 33, 268, 305
 Chremylus 197, 200, 205, 210, 272
 Chrysale 281
 Chrysippus 98
 Chrysostom 39, 39n., 40
Chrysostomos . . . sein Verhältnis zum Hellenismus, Naegele's 40n.
 Cicero, M. T. 39, 39n., 41, 63, 64, 87, 88n., 89-91, 91n., 92, 92n., 93-98, 100, 100n., 102, 132, 200, 260, 289
 Cicero, Q. T. 91, 91n.
 Cinesias 157, 158
 Cinesias, in *Lysistrata* 270, 278
 Cinesias, the poet 264
 City Dionysia 194, 282
 Civic Justice (see also Dicaeopolis) 193
Civil Wars, Daniel's 227
Clansmen, Leucon's 28, 157
 Clark 35n.
Classical Library 88n
Classical Philology 35n., 48n., 71n., 290
Classical Review 22n.
Classical Studies in Honor of C. F. Smith 89n.
 Cléante 256, 273, 274
 Cleon 241, 251, 260
 Cléonte 244, 256
 Cleophon 143, 143n., 170
 Clinia 305
 Clitandre 256
 Cloudecockootown 242, 245, 264, 272
Clouds, Aristophanes' 28, 38, 39, 50, 73, 75, 104, 105, 105n., 113, 113n., 124, 141n., 156, 212, 223, 231, 235, 236, 238, 239, 241, 242, 245, 246, 248, 250, 252, 257, 260-262, 267, 274, 278, 280
 Clouds, chorus of 73, 75
 Clouds, new divinities 257
Clouds, Rogers' edition 38n., 50n., 105n.
Clouds, Starkie's edition 105n., 113n., 238, 239, 245
 Clytaemnestra 295
Cocalus, Aristophanes' 22n., 23, 24, 47, 285
Cock and the Bull, The, Calverley's 238, 239, 257, 258
 Coislin, De 10
Coislinianus, Tractatus, see Tractate.
 'Comedy,' in *L'Amour Médécine* 81, 82
Comedy, On, Theophrastus' 127
Comedy of Errors, Shakespeare' 190, 197, 205, 208, 281, 286, 305
Comicorum Graecorum Frag-

- menta*, Kaibel's (see also Kaibel) 11, 11n.
Commentaries, Favorinus' 101
 Commonwealth, English 25
Comoedia, De, Donatus' 91n., 132
Comparison of Aristophanes and Menander, Plutarchian 35, 90
Concordance of Aristophanes, Dunbar's 280
 Congreve 25
Connus, Ameipsias' 28, 105, 157, 350
 Conrade 274
 Constable, in *L'Avare* 245
Constitution of Athens, Aristotle's 9, 12, 12n., 161, 161n., 227
 Conthyle 231
 Cook 71n., 100n.
 Cope 141n., 152n., 160n.
 Corin 268, 269
Coriolanus, Shakespeare's 230, 245, 258
 Cornford 22n., 44, 45n., 48, 48n., 49, 49n., 122n., 263-265
 Corpse, in the *Frogs* 173, 245, 250, 261
 Coville 244
 Cramer 6n., 10, 10n.
 Crates, comic poet 21, 28, 29, 48, 49, 71, 112, 150, 151, 160, 177, 178,
 Crates, critic 157, 157n.
 Cratinus 28, 34, 37, 92, 102, 151, 152n., 157, 157n., 160, 251, 260, 288
 Creon 291
 Crispinus 273
Critique de l'École des Femmes, La, Molière's 81, 81n.
 Crito 126, 126n.
 Croce 78-80, 80n.
 Croiset, A. 3, 4n., 24, 24n., 105n.
 Croiset, M. 4n., 17n., 31, 31n., 36, 36n., 39n., 49n., 120n., Cujas 281
 Cyclops 131, 170, 171
Cyclops, Euripides' 171, 228
 Cynics 97, 98
 Daedalus 32, 159
 Daedalus, Aristophanes' 28, 32, 157n., 159
 Daedalus, Eubulus' 159n.
 Daedalus, Philippus' 159n.
 Daniel 227
 Dante 76
 Darwin 227
 Daw 234
De Anima, Aristotle's 31, 32, 133, 134n., 159, 159n.
De Caelo, Aristotle's 51
 De Coislin 10
De Comoedia, Donatus' 91n.
De Divinatione, Aristotle's 149, 149n.
De Elocutione, Demetrius' 71n., 102, 103, 103n., 138, 149, 149n., 150, 150n.
Defence of Poetry, Shelley's 100n.
Defense of Poesy, Sidney's 71n., 72n.
De Generatione Animalum, Aristotle's 112, 145, 145n., 153, 153n., 162, 162n.
De Interpretatione, Aristotle's 141, 141n.
De Legibus, Cicero's 39n., 91n.,
De Mysteriis, (?) Iamblichus' 82, 83n.
De Officiis, Cicero's 39n., 91n.
De Oratore, Cicero's 88n., 89n., 289
De Partibus Animalum, Aristotle's 163, 163n.
De Sensu, Aristotle's 29, 158, 158n.
De Sophisticis Elenchis, Aristotle's 35, 146, 231
 Dead man, in the *Frogs* 173, 245, 250, 261
 Dekker 273
 Delphi 114
 Demeter 277
 Demetrius 26, 71, 102, 103, 103n., 138, 138n., 149, 149n., 150, 150n.
 Democritus, predecessor of Aristotle 126
 Democritus, philosopher 87, 89, 99, 159

- Demosthenes 141n., 213
 Demus 198, 250, 260, 262-264, 278
 Dervishes 254
 Despautère 258
 Dew, Signieur 236
 Diafoirus, Monsieur 231
 Diafoirus, Thomas 231, 242, 256
Dialog, Der, Hirzel's 1, 101n., 102n., 103n., 112n.
 Dialogues, Alexamenus' 101
 Dialogues, Plato's 20, 21, 38, 99-102, 102n., 103, 104, 107, 112, 116, 123, 125, 127, 276
 Dicaeopolis 193, 200, 203, 229, 252, 277, 278, 283
 Dickens 261
Didascaliae, Aristotle's 16, 28, 30, 151, 156, 157, 159, 161
Diliad, Nicochares' 170
 Dindorf 156, 157
 Diogenes, the Cynic 98
 Diogenes Laertius 89n., 100, 100n., 101, 101n., 126, 126n., 127, 127n.
 Diomede 175
 Diomedes 51, 85
 Dionysius 'the Brazen' 230
 Dionysius, painter 169
 Dionysius, tyrant 39
 Dionysius Thrax 51, 85
 Dionysus 17n., 141n., 185, 189, 195-197, 202, 204, 206, 207, 210, 221, 240, 241, 243, 245, 247, 249, 250, 255, 262, 267, 269, 274, 276, 277, 289
 Diphilus 48
 Disciple, in the *Clouds* 244, 247, 248, 267
Divinatione, De, Aristotle's 149, 149n.
 Dogberry 231, 246, 248, 252, 258, 262, 268, 274
 Donatus 91n., 132
Don Juan, Byron's 189, 215
Don Juan, Molière's 209, 246, 262, 267
Don Quixote, Cervantes' 216, 263
 Dorante 81n.
 Dorians 172, 173
 Dovregubbe 255
 Dübner 23n.
 Dugas 65n., 77, 78n.
 Duke, Solinus 205, 281
 Dunbar 280
 Dutch painters 169
Duty, Ode to, Wordsworth's 227
Ecclesiazusae, Aristophanes' 24, 38, 58, 272
École des Femmes, L', Molière's 81, 267, 268
 Ecphantides 29, 128, 151, 152, 152n., 162
 Egger 35, 35n., 45n., 100, 101n., 125n., 126n., 127n.
 Egypt 304
 Elbow 232
 Electra 299
Electra, Sophocles' 86
 Elizabethan comedy 25
 Elmiro 274
Elocutione, De, Demetrius' 26, 71, 71n., 102., 103, 103n., 138, 138n., 149, 149n., 150, 150n.
 Elyot 39, 39n.
 Empedocles 227
Encyclopedia Americana 48n.
 England 25
 English 283
 Ephesus 281
 Epicharmus 28-30, 48, 49, 55, 102, 102n., 103, 111, 112, 150-152, 152n., 153, 153n., 154, 154n., 155, 155n., 172, 177
 Epicrates 26
 Eraste 273
 Eratosthenes 156, 157
Ergänzung zu Aristoteles' Poetik, Bernays' 10, 15
 Escalus 232
Essay on Comedy, Meredith's 80n.
Ethics, Aristotle's, see *Eudemian Ethics*, *Nicomachean Ethics*.
Etourdi, L', Molière's 273
 Eubulus, comic poet 31, 32, 151, 159, 159n.

- Eubulus, orator 105, 158
 Euclides 126
 Euclio 196
Eudemian Ethics, Aristotle's 7, 121, 121n.
 Euelpides 193, 230, 235, 241, 262, 267
 Euergides 231
 Euphues 242
 Eupolis 28, 37, 92, 105, 105n., 151, 156, 157, 161, 251
 Euripides 15, 21, 23-25, 27, 30, 31, 40, 48, 71, 86, 103, 137n., 141, 158, 171, 185, 193-196, 198, 204, 207, 210, 219-221, 228, 232, 235, 238, 239, 243, 247-249, 251, 255, 260, 267, 272, 273, 277, 280n., 284, 288
 Europe, southern 255
Euthydemus, Plato's 158n.
 Evans, Sir Hugh 244
 Evenus 135n.
Every Man in his Humor, Jon-son's 270

Facheux, Les, Molière's 81n., 209
Faerie Queene, Spenser's 170
 Falstaff 25, 229, 234, 236, 237, 240, 242, 244, 249, 252, 254, 256, 261-263, 268-270, 273, 275, 279, 286
 Faust 255
Faust, Goethe's 255
 Favorinus 101
Femmes Savantes, Les, Molière's 231, 237, 238, 256, 259, 279, 281
 Ferdinand 275
 Fernand 281
 Feste 244, 268, 269, 275
Festin de Pierre, Le, see *Don Juan*, Molière's.
 Fielding 207, 215
First Alcibiades, Plato's 112, 112n.
 First Proem, Tzetzes' 287-289
 Fiske 89n., 90n., 96-97, 97n., 98, 98n.
Flagon, Cratinus' 28, 157
Flatterer, Eupolis' 28, 157
 Flemish painters 170
 Flickinger 22n.
 Fluellen 237, 283
 Flute 236, 237
Fragmenta, Aristotle's 13n., 100n., 101, 101n., 150, 150n., 156, 156n., 157, 157n., 158, 158n., 159, 159n., 161, 161n.
 French 282
 French Soldier 236
 French theorists 190
 Frere 73, 170
 Freud 76, 77, 77n., 78, 78n.
Frogs, Aristophanes' 28, 40, 47, 48, 50, 52, 58, 61, 73, 74, 116n., 125n., 141n., 143, 157, 158, 161, 173, 185, 189, 194-198, 202, 204, 206, 207, 210, 212, 213, 220, 221, 232, 234, 239-241, 243, 245, 247, 249-251, 255, 257, 260-262, 267-270, 274, 276, 277, 284, 285, 288
Frogs, chorus of 73, 74, 207, 221
Frogs, Rogers' edition 232
 Froth 232
Function of Suspense, Moriarty's 68n.

 Gadshill 233, 273
 Gaunt 229
Generatone Animalium, De, Aristotle's 112, 145, 145n., 153, 153n., 162, 162n.
 Genesis, Book of 303, 304
 Géronte 258
Gerontomania, Anaxandrides' 160, 160n.
Geschichte der Autobiographie, Misch's 1
 Gib (Gilbert) 234
 Gilbert, W. S. 255
 Glaucon 126, 221
 Glaucus 175
Gliederung der Alltattischen Ko-moedie, Zielinski's 44
 Grammar, Despautère's 258
 Grant 98, 99, 99n.
 Gray's Inn 256
 Goethe 255

- Gollancz 15n.
Good Men, The, (?) Anaxandrides' 160, 160n.
 Gorgias 26, 123, 144, 152n.
Gorgias, Plato's 112, 112n., 152n.
Gouverneur, The, Elyot's 39n.
 Greece 17n.
Greek Anthology 39
Greek Culture, Cooper's 48n.
Greek Theatre, Flickinger's 22n.
 Greeks, the 255
 Greg 1
Griechische Roman, Der, Rohde's 1
 Grieg 255
 Grimarest 271
 Guard, in *Le Malade Imaginaire* 279
 Gudeman 107n., 126n., 179, 209n., 298n., 301, 302

 Hades 189, 195, 196, 248
 Haigh 22n., 73n., 125n., 158n., 253, 255, 282
 Hal, see Prince Hal
Hall of the Mountain King, In the, Grieg's 255
Hamlet, Shakespeare's 230, 248
 Harpagon 171, 177, 196, 241, 245, 261
 Harpocraton 161
 Hawker 264
 Hegemon 28, 150, 161, 170
 Heitz 158n., 159n.
 Helicon 273
Hellenistic Comedy, The Antecedents of, Prescott's 71n.
 Hendrickson 90n.
 1 *Henry IV*, Shakespeare's 229, 233, 236, 240-242, 244, 249, 269, 270, 275, 279
 2 *Henry IV*, Shakespeare's 239, 256
Henry V, Shakespeare's 234, 236, 237, 240, 256, 283
 Hense 116n.
Heracleid 189
 Heracles 189, 196, 204, 207, 209, 221, 241, 250, 255, 257, 260, 261, 270, 276, 280, 283, 289
 Heraclides 126, 126n.
 Heraclitus 83
 Herald of King Aegyptus 160n.
Hermathena 15n., 231, 234, 242
 Hermes 145, 277
 Hermippus 233
 Hermit of Prague 268, 269
 Herne 244
 Herodotus 191
 Hesiod 227
 Hicks 134n.
 Hippias 126
 Hippocrates 82
 Hipponax 97, 259
 Hirzel 1, 3, 101n., 102n., 103n., 112, 112n.
Histoire de la Littérature Grecque (see also Croiset) 4n., 17n., 24n.
Historia Animalium, Aristotle's 163, 163n., 231
History of New York, Knickerbocker's (Irving's) 247
 Hobbes 79, 80
 Hogarth 169
 Homer (see also *Iliad*, *Margites*, and *Odyssey*) 1, 15, 21, 28, 37, 39-41, 92, 101, 106, 107, 111, 127, 132, 136, 150, 170-172, 174, 175, 190, 191, 217, 218, 243, 295, 296, 301, 303
 Hoopoe 196, 211
 Hopeful (see also *Euelpides*) 193
 Horace 86, 86n., 87, 97, 99n.
 'Horace' (Ben Jonson) 273
 Hostess, see Quickly
 Hugo 261
 Hutton 263
 Hybla 249

 Iamblichus 82, 83, 83n.
Ἰαυβοὶ τετυγχοί, Tzetzes' 51n.
 Ibsen 255
Ichneutae, Sophocles' 288
Idylls of the King, Tennyson's 170
Idylls, Theocritus' 171
Iliad 136n., 141n., 171, 175, 191
 Ilium 190
 Imole, Jean 281

- Index Aristotelicus*, Bonitz's 34,
 35, 61n.
 Informer 264
 Inspector 264, 274
Institutio Oratoria, Quintilian's
 36n., 39n., 92, 92n., 96n.
Interpretatione, De, Aristotle's
 141, 141n.
 Iocasta 33
Ion, Plato's 103, 276
 Iphicrates 142
 Iphigenia 294
Iphigenia among the Taurians,
 Euripides' 27, 40, 71
 Iris 73, 204, 229, 247, 250
 Irus 175
 Irving 247, 276
 Isarchus 157
 Italy 190

 Jacobean comedy 25
 Jacqueline 249, 282
 Japanese, the 74
 Jean Imole 281
 Jean Paul 80
 Jebb 62n., 123n., 124n., 125n.,
 135n., 138n., 142n., 143n.,
 144n., 145n., 147n., 153n.,
 156n., 158n.
 Jonson 270, 273
 Josan 281
 Joseph 204, 303, 304
 Jourdain 253, 254, 256, 262, 279
 Jowett 104, 104n., 105n., 107n.,
 108n., 109n., 110n., 111n.,
 112n., 113n., 114n., 116n.,
 125n., 128n., 129n., 131n.,
 162n.
Juan, Don, Byron's 189, 215
Juan, Don (Le Festin de Pierre),
 Molière's 209, 246, 262, 267
 Julian 281
 Julie 273
 Just Reason, in the *Clouds* 50
 Justinian 281

 Kaibel 11, 11n., 23n., 27n.,
 37n., 51n., 85, 86n., 91n.,
 151n., 152n., 153n., 155n.,
 224, 259, 287, 287n.
 Kant 79, 80

 Kayser 11, 11n., 14, 14n., 64n.,
 76n., 224, 228n., 262
 Kent 22, 22n.
 Kenyon 161n.
King Arthur, Frere's 170
 King, the Great 229, 283
 King's Eye 229
 Knickerbocker 247, 276
 Knights 263, 264
Knights, Aristophanes' 141n.,
 178, 198, 213, 234, 250, 257,
 260, 262, 278
 Kock 26n., 31n., 32, 32n.,
 33n., 34, 34n., 105n., 113n.,
 147n., 148n., 149n., 150n.,
 156n., 157n., 158n., 159n.,
 160n., 233, 260
Kritik Aristotelischer Schriften.
 Zur, Vahlen's 290
 Kroll 85n.

 Labes 274
 Lacedaemon 162
 Lacedaemonians 119
 Lady Macbeth 295
 Lady Sovereignty 73, 257, 280,
 283
 Laertius, Diogenes 89n., 100,
 100n., 101, 101n., 126, 126n.,
 127, 127n.
 La Flèche 196
 Laius 33, 157
 Lampito 282
 Lang 296
 Languedoc 282
Laputa, Voyage to, Swift's 231,
 245
Laughable, On the, Greek and
 Latin books 89, 93, 94
Laughable, On the, Theophras-
 tus' 127
 Launce 232, 238
Laws, Plato's 99, 108, 109, 110,
 110n., 111, 111n., 121, 125,
 125n., 127, 129n.
 Léandre 241, 273
 Leeuwen, Van 72
Legibus, De, Cicero's 39n.,
 91n.
 Legrand 1, 26, 26n., 36n., 59,
 59n.

- Lentulus 95
Letters of William Stubbs, Hut-
 ton's 263
 Leucon 28, 151, 157
Lexicon, Harpocraton's 161
Lexicon, Photius' 159
*Library of the World's Best
 Literature*, Warner's 49n.
 Lincoln 291
 Lingua Franca 282
Literarische Porträt der Griechen,
 Das, Bruns' 1
 Lorenz 152n.
 Louison 274, 278, 279
 Lucan 227
 Lucas 238, 249, 275, 279, 282
 Lucette 275, 282
 Lucian 39, 245
 Lucretius 227
 Lycambes 21
 Lycophron 144
Lyrisk und Lyriker, Werner's 1
 Lysias 103
 Lysistrata 72, 270, 272, 282
Lysistrata, Aristophanes' 40,
 40n., 72, 202, 209, 212, 236,
 250, 270, 271, 278
Lysistrata, Rogers' edition 40n.,
 72n.
 Macbeth, Lady 295
 McMahon 4, 4n., 6, 6n., 7, 7n.,
 8n., 11, 11n., 14n., 16, 16n.,
 63, 63n.
 Magnes 28, 150, 161, 172
 Mahaffy 3
Malade Imaginaire, Le, Mo-
 lière's 177, 194, 209, 231, 238,
 243, 244, 253, 254, 256, 261,
 265, 267, 268, 271, 273, 274,
 276, 278, 279, 282, 286
 Malvolio 261, 269, 275
 Manutius, Aldus 39n., 40
Margites, Homeric 132, 172,
 174, 175
 Margoliouth 301
Maricas, Eupolis' 28, 156
 Marsyas 240
 Martine 237, 281
 Mascarille 273
 Maslow 103n.
 Matthew, Book of 245
 Maximes du Marriage, Les 268
 Mazon 56, 56n., 57-59, 59n.
Measure for Measure, Shake-
 speare's 232
Médecin Malgré Lui, Le, Mo-
 lière's 238, 241, 242, 249, 258,
 262, 263, 265, 273, 275, 279,
 282
 Megara 162, 172, 282
 Megarian, the 244
 Meineke 18, 30, 30n., 31, 32n.,
 39, 145n., 150, 152n., 158n.,
 159n., 160n., 287n.
 Melampus 51, 85
 Meletus 157
 Memnon 242
Menaechmi, Plautus' 190
 Menander 23, 24, 27, 35, 36,
 41, 44, 48, 59, 71, 90, 192,
 193, 198, 209, 244, 268, 272
 285, 286
*Menander, Comparison between
 Aristophanes and*, Plutarchian
 35, 90
 Menedemus 268
 Meno 101
 Mephistopheles 255
 Meredith 80, 80n., 81
 Merope 291
Merry Wives of Windsor, The,
 Shakespeare's 230, 244, 254
Metaphysics, Aristotle's 7, 112,
 153, 154, 154n., 155, 155n., 290
Meteorologica, Aristotle's 150,
 150n.
 Meton 247, 264
 Midas 234, 288
 Middle Ages 3
 Middle Comedy 12, 19, 23, 25-
 27, 27n., 31, 32, 34, 36, 37,
 41, 48, 71, 122, 124, 149n.,
 193, 212, 272, 285-287
 Middleton 234
Midsummer-Night's Dream, A,
 Shakespeare's 229, 235-237,
 241, 242, 246, 249, 256, 258
 Miller 91n.
 Mimes 20, 38, 101-102, 102n.,
 103, 108n., 112, 132, 168,
 169, 228

- Mimus, Der*, Reich's 1, 102n., 108n.
Misanthrope, Le, Molière's 286
 Misch 1
 Mnesilochus 238, 272, 278
 Molière (see also *Amour Médecin*, *Amphitryon*, *Avare*, *Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, *Critique de l'École des Femmes*, *Don Juan*, *École des Femmes*, *Étourdi*, *Facheux*, *Femmes Savantes*, *Malade Imaginaire*, *Médecin Malgré Lui*, *Misanthrope*, *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac*, *Tartuffe*) 15, 15n., 44, 80-82, 171, 177, 189, 191, 195, 196, 198, 205, 206, 208, 209, 220, 231, 242, 245, 246, 252, 256, 258, 261, 262, 265, 267, 271, 274, 280, 282, 286
 Momax 234, 288
Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, Molière's 244, 261, 262, 265, 273, 275, 279, 280, 282
 Moonshine 237
 Moriarty 68
 Moses 234
Much Ado about Nothing, Shakespeare's 246, 248, 258, 268, 273, 274
 Muṭi, the 254
 Muses, the 273
 'Music,' in *L'Amour Médecin* 81
 Mustard-seed 236
 Myrrhina 270, 278
Mysians, Philoxenus' 131
Mysteris, De, (?) Iamblichus' 82, 83n.
 Naegele 40n.
Nature, On, Parmenides' 227
 Nauck 137n.
 Naxos 256
 Nemesis 260
Nemesis, Cratinus' 260
 Nérine 273, 275, 282
 New Comedy 12, 16, 19, 23, 26-28, 34, 36, 37, 89-91, 187, 192, 193, 212, 226, 241, 251, 259, 265, 272, 285-288, 305
New Greek Comedy, The (see also Legrand) 1
 Nicochares 33, 150, 161, 170
Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle's 7, 9, 13, 16, 19, 20, 23, 25, 30, 31, 65, 69, 70, 102n., 117, 117n., 118-120, 120n., 122, 133, 134, 134n., 139, 154, 154n., 160, 160n., 162, 162n., 165, 165n., 176, 231, 259, 260, 262, 263
 Nikon 146
 Nightingale 73, 231, 235
 'Ninny' 235, 236
 Ninus 236
 Nym 256
 Odysseus 143, 175, 190, 191, 204, 243, 294-297, 301-303, 305
Odysseus with the False Tidings 297-303
 Odyssey 61, 91, 132, 141n., 171, 175, 189-191, 197, 201, 211, 216, 217, 223, 228, 296, 302, 303
Oedipodia, Meletus' 157
 Oedipus 33, 291, 292
Oedipus the King, Sophocles' 27, 40, 54, 71, 141n., 172, 187, 191, 228
Officiis, De, Cicero's 39n., 91n., Ogle 163n.
 Old Comedy 12, 16, 20n., 21, 23, 24, 26-28, 34, 35-37, 39-41, 47, 49, 55, 72, 74, 75, 90-92, 97, 102, 122, 124, 125, 143, 148n., 149n., 152, 152n., 192, 226, 252, 259, 260, 264, 268, 285-288
 Olympiodorus 38, 112
 Olympus 257
On Comedy, Theophrastus' 127
On Nature, Parmenides' 267
On Pleonasm, Aristotle's, not the Stagirite 127
On Poetry, Democritus' 126
On Poets, Aristotle's dialogue 8, 14, 15, 101, 204
On Rhythms and Harmony, Democritus' 126

- On Style*, Demetrius,' see *De Elocutione*.
On Style, Theophrastus' 127
On the Art of Poetry, Aristotle's, not the Stagirite 127
On the Art of Poetry, Theophrastus' 127
On the Choral Dancer, Antiphon's 161
On the Laughable, Greek and Latin books 89, 93, 94
On the Laughable, Theophrastus' 127
 Oracle-monger 264
Orator, Cicero's 88n., 92n., 100n.
Oratore, *De*, Cicero's 88n., 89n., 289
Orestera, Aeschylus' 277
 Orestes 61, 150, 201, 294, 299
Orestes, Alexis' 31, 150, 192
Orestes, Euripides' 86
 Organ 205, 274
Origin of Attic Comedy, *The*, Cornford's 44
 Oronte 275
 Oxford translation of Aristotle 121n., 131n., 145n., 161n., 162n.
 Page, Anne 254
 Palamedes 160
 Pan 145
 Panaetius 89, 98
Pancratiastes, Philemon's 34, 35
 Pantacles 161
 Panza, Sancho 263
 Paphlagon 260, 278
 Papinian 281
 Paris 75
 Parmenides 227
 Parnassus 190, 273
 Parthey 83n.
Partibus Animalium, *De*, Aristotle's 163, 163n.
 Pasias 274
Pastoral Drama, Greg's 1
 Paul Castre 281
 Pauson 129, 169, 221
Peace, Aristophanes' 28, 58, 157, 173, 213, 234, 241, 242, 245, 251, 271
 Pedro, Don 257, 258
Peer Gynt, Ibsen's 255
Peer Gynt Suite, Grieg's 255
 Pegasus 242, 245
 Peisthetaerus 193, 196, 200, 203, 231, 241, 245, 264, 267, 270-272, 274, 280, 283
 Peleus 33
 Peloponnese 172
 Peloponnesian war 24, 287
 Penelope 61, 296, 297, 302, 303, 305
Peparethia, (?) Antiphanes' 34, 149, 149n.
 Percy 244
 Pericles 129, 159, 242, 251, 260
Perinthia 149n.
 Peripatetics 13, 14, 16, 48, 64
 Persia 229
 Persian war 227
Phaedo, Plato's 103, 105, 105n., 106, 113, 231
Phaedrus, Plato's 42n., 99n., 103, 113, 113n., 276
 Pharaoh 270
Pharsalia, Lucan's 227
 Pheidippides 280
 Pherecrates 120
 'Phibbus' 237
 Phido 33
 Philaminte 256, 281
 Philammon 148, 149
Philebus, Plato's 11, 66, 79, 100, 114-116, 116n., 127, 134
 Philemon, actor 160
 Philemon, comic poet 23, 24, 34, 35, 41, 48
 Philippus 31, 32, 151, 159, 159n.
 Philocleon 262, 278
 Philoctetes 165
Philologus 107n., 209n.
 Philomela 26
Philosophical Review 42n.
 Philoxenus 131, 151, 170, 171
 Phlya 231
 Phoebeus 237
 Phoenicides 33
Phoenissae, Strattis' 158n.

- Phormis 28, 49, 112, 150, 161, 177
Phorides, Aeschylus' 139, 228
 Photius 159
 Phrynichus 253
Physica Auscultatio, Aristotle's 51, 143, 143n., 149, 149n., 158n., 247
 Physiologus 242
 Picardy 282
 Pindar 145
 Pirates, chorus of 255
Pirates of Penzance, Gilbert and Sullivan's 255
 Pistol 236
 Placidus 95
Plain Style in the Scipionic Circle, Fiske's 89n.
 Plato, comic poet 29, 33, 105, 112, 113n., 151, 158, 158n.
 Plato, philosopher (see also *Dialogues*, and *Apology*, *First Alcibiades*, *Euthydemus*, *Gorgias*, *Ion*, *Laws*, *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, *Philebus*, *Protagoras*, *Republic*, *Symposium*, *Theaetetus*) 5, 7, 11, 20, 21, 26, 29, 38, 39, 42, 66, 76, 79, 80, 83, 84, 90-92, 97-99, 99n., 100-102, 102n., 104, 104n., 105, 105n., 107-109, 111-114, 116n., 121-123, 125-127, 129n., 131, 134, 151, 152n., 155n., 157, 158n., 169, 187, 240, 263, 276
Platonis Rem Publicam, *In*, Proclus Diadochus' 85n.
 Platonius 23, 37, 37n.
 Platt 145n.
 Plautus 27n., 44, 50, 91, 97, 187, 189, 193, 196, 198, 206, 209, 212, 244, 265, 305
Pleonasm, *On*, Aristotle's, not the Stagiritae 127
 Plutarch 35, 90
 Plutus 196, 205, 207, 229, 272
Plutus, Aristophanes' 22, 24, 40, 47, 50, 58, 68, 171, 189, 193, 196-198, 205, 207, 208, 210, 229, 233, 250, 253, 272, 278, 284, 285
Plutus, Rogers' edition 23 n., 24n., 253
 Poet, in the *Birds* 259, 264
Poetics, Aristotle's. References to the work are omitted; but see 'Amplified Version,' Anti-Atticist, Arabic version, Butcher, Bywater, Gudeman, Iamblichus, McMahon, Margoliouth, Proclus, Rutherford, Starkie, Vahlen.
Poetry, *On*, Democritus' 126
Poets, *On*, Aristotle's dialogue 8, 14, 15, 101, 204
Poiesis, Antiphanes' 32
Poiesis, Aristophanes' 32, 40
Poietai, Alexis' 32
Poietai, Plato's, the comic poet 33
Poietes, Biontius' 33
Poietes, Nicochares' 33
Poietes, Phoenicides' 33
Poietes, Plato's, the comic poet 33
Poietria, Alexis' 32
 Poins 229, 270, 273, 275, 279
 Polichinelle 194, 253, 279
Pohtics, Aristotle's 5, 9, 12, 13n., 19, 20, 29, 30, 34, 43, 63, 64, 70, 104, 111, 123, 125, 125n., 128, 128n., 129, 129n., 130, 131, 131n., 152, 152n., 157n., 162, 162n., 180, 283
 Polonius 248, 262
 Polybus 141, 291
 Polygnotus 129, 169
 Polyidus 42n.
 Polymachaeroplages 212
 Polyphemus 131, 171, 175
 Pompey 232
 Porson 238, 239
 Poseidon 251, 270
Potamu, Strattis' 158n.
 Potiphar 304
 Potiphar's wife 304
Pourceaugnac, *Monsieur de*, Molière's, see *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac*.
Pourceaugnac, Monsieur de (the hero) 244, 261, 262, 273, 275, 279, 280, 282

- Poverty 210
 Praeses 271
 Prat, Mother 244
 Praxagora 272
 Prescott 48, 48n., 71n.
 Pre-Socratics 98, 277
 Priest, in the *Birds* 264
 Prince Hal 240, 244, 249, 269, 270, 273, 275, 279, 281
Problems, Aristotle's 69, 155, 155n., 163, 163n., 164, 164n., 165, 165n., 231
 Proclus Diadochus 64, 83-85, 85n., 90
 Prometheus 250, 251
Prometheus Bound, Aeschylus' 301
 Protagoras 126
Protagoras, Plato's 103, 276
 Protarchus 114
Proverbs, Zenobius' 157n., 159
 Pseudartabas 213, 229, 244, 278, 283
Pseudolus, Plautus' 212
Psychologie du Rive, Dugas' 65n., 78n.
 Puck 249
Pun in the Rhetoric of Aristotle, A, Cooper's 36n., 147n.
 Pyramus 235
 Pythagoras 269
 Quasimodo 261
 Quickly (Hostess) 234, 237, 239, 249
 Quilp 261
 Quince 229, 236, 237, 246
 Quintilian 36, 36n., 39, 39n., 41, 92, 92n., 93-96, 96n.
 Quixote, Don 216, 263
 Rabelais 15n., 231, 247, 257
 Radermacher 96n.
 Raphael 170
 Rebuffe 281
 Reich 1, 102n., 108n.
 Renaissance 3, 7, 30n., 190, 198
Republic, Plato's 5, 7, 38, 83-85, 85n., 101, 104, 106, 107, 107n., 108, 108n., 109, 109n., 111, 113, 121, 122, 127, 131, 131n., 187, 276
 Restoration comedy 25
 Rhadamanthus 160
Rhetoric, Aristotle's 3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 13n., 14, 16, 17, 21n., 26n., 29, 30, 30n., 34, 36, 40, 49, 54, 62, 66, 66n., 69, 87, 91n., 96, 105, 105n., 116n., 123, 123n., 124, 124n., 125, 125n., 127, 132n., 133-135, 135n., 136-138, 138n., 139, 140, 141, 141n., 142, 142n., 143, 143n., 144, 144n., 145, 145n., 146, 147, 147n., 148, 149, 149n., 152, 152n., 153, 153n., 155, 156, 156n., 158, 158n., 160, 160n., 209, 227, 230, 231, 235, 236, 239, 263, 265, 266, 273, 283
Rhetorik der Griechen und Römer, Volkmann's 259
Rhythms and Harmony, On, Democritus' 126
Richard II, Shakespeare's 229
 Richter 80
Ring and the Book, The, Brown-ing's 238
Rivals, The, Sheridan's 271
 Roberts 103, 103n., 149n.
 Rogers 23n., 24, 24n., 28n., 39n., 40, 40n., 50, 50n., 72, 72n., 73, 73n., 229, 232, 253, 259, 282, 283
 Rohde 1, 3
Roman Comedy, The Interpretation of, Prescott's 48n.
 Roman satirists 97
 Romans, the 96
 Rome 89
 Rose 13n., 100n., 101n., 150n., 156n., 157n., 158n., 159n., 161n.
 Ross 121n., 131n., 161n., 162n., 163n.
 Rostand 208, 240
 Rutherford 6, 6n., 11, 11n., 15, 16, 30, 36, 50, 50n., 147n., 236
 Sampson Stockfish 256
 Sancho Panza 263
 Sandys 12n., 141n., 152n., 160n.

- Satromastix*, Dekker's 273
Satires, Horace's 86n., 97, 90n.
 Sausage-seller 213, 257, 278
Savages (*ἄγριοι*), Pherecrates' 120
 Sbrigani 244, 273, 275
 Scaliger 3
 Scipio 95
 Scolion, Aristotle's 13, 227
 Scythian 252, 253, 272, 283
Secunda Pastorum 234
Self-Tormentor, Terence's 268, 272, 285, 305
Sensu, De, Aristotle's 29, 158, 158n.
 'Serapion' 95
 Servingman, First 245, 246, 258
 Servingman, Second 245, 246, 258
 Sexton 274
 Sganarelle, in Molière's *Don Juan* 246, 262, 267
 Sganarelle, in *Le Médecin Malgré Lui* 238, 241, 242, 249, 258, 262, 263, 265, 273, 275, 279
 Shakespeare (see also *As You Like It*, *Comedy of Errors*, *Coriolanus*, *Hamlet*, 1 *Henry IV*, 2 *Henry IV*, *Henry V*, *Measure for Measure*, *Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *Richard II*, *Taming of the Shrew*, *Twelfth-Night*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Tempest*) 15, 15n., 25, 40, 44, 75, 80, 168, 190, 197, 205, 206, 208, 231, 232, 238, 240, 242, 245, 252, 254, 261, 262, 268, 275, 282, 283, 286, 305
Shakespearean Tragedy, Bradley's 2
 Shallow 256
 Shamartabas (see also *Pseudartabas*) 244
 Shelley 100, 100n., 228
 Sheridan 270, 271
 Shorey 49n.
 Shute 7
 Sicily 48, 49, 71, 112, 172, 177
 Sicyonians 172
 Signieur Dew 236
 Sidney 71n., 72n.
 Silenus 240
 Simmias 126, 126n.
 Simon 126, 126n.
 Simonides 152n., 155, 230, 251
Sir Thopas, Chaucer's *Tale of* 257
 Sir Topas 244, 275
 Sir Vaughan 273
 Sire-striker 264, 280
 Skogan 256
 Sly 242, 256
 Smith, J. A. 145n., 163n.
 Socrates 21, 38, 42, 75, 91, 96, 97, 100-102, 104, 105, 107-109, 111-114, 116n., 119, 122, 124, 126, 127, 131, 151, 193, 231, 235, 239, 240, 241, 244-248, 250, 251, 257, 260, 261, 263, 267, 278, 288
 'Socratic conversations' 100, 101, 102, 168, 169
 Socratics, the 89
 Solinus, Duke 205, 281
 Solomon, J. 121n.
 Solon 12, 227, 280
Sophisticus Elenchis, De, Aristotle's 35, 46, 231
 Sophists 251
 Sophocles 1, 15, 23, 24, 27, 28, 30, 37, 39-41, 48, 71, 86, 103, 141, 142, 172, 187, 191, 228, 251, 255, 280n., 283, 292
 Sophron 38, 100, 101, 102, 102n., 103, 108n., 138, 151, 168, 228
 Sovereignty, Lady 73, 257, 280, 283
 Sparta 212, 241, 270, 271, 282
 Speed 238
 Spencer 77
 Spengel 158n., 160n.
 Spenser 170
 Speusippus 26, 126, 126n.
 Sphinx 291, 292
 'Spinther' 95
 Starkie 6, 6n., 15, 15n., 16, 29n., 30, 36, 44, 105n., 113n., 231, 234, 235, 238-240, 242, 244-246, 250, 252, 256

- Stobaeus** 116n.
Stockfish 256
Stoics 97, 98
Storks, Aristophanes' 28, 157
Strabo 116n.
Strattis 28, 29, 34, 151, 158, 158n., 260
Strepsiades 141n., 242, 244, 246-248, 257, 262, 274, 289
Strobilus 196
Strymodore 231
Stubbs 263
Style, On, Demetrius', see De Elocutione.
Style, On, Theophrastus' 127
Sullivan 255
Summoner's Tale, Chaucer's 276
Suppliant Maidens 160n.
Susarion 37, 288
Swift 206, 231, 240, 245
Symposium, Plato's 29, 38, 99n., 103, 107, 108, 111, 113, 113n., 114, 114n., 123, 126, 169, 240
Syracuse 39, 281
Syriac version of the Poetics 302

Talkover (see also Peisthetaerus) 193
Taming of the Shrew, The, Shakespeare's 242, 256
Tam O' Shanter, Burns' 255
Tartuffe 171, 177, 205, 220, 265, 281
Tartuffe, Molière's 191, 195, 208, 220, 274, 281, 286
Taylor, Jeremy 39
Tempest, The, Shakespeare's 27, 168, 235, 236, 242, 249, 254, 275, 286
Temples Revels 273
Tennyson 170
Terence 27n., 35, 44, 50, 71, 91, 187, 189, 193, 244, 265, 268, 281, 285, 305
Terpander 157n.
Teucer 33
Teucer, Sophocles' 142
Theaetetus, Plato's 111, 112n., 151, 155n.
Thebes 292

Thelema 231
Theocritus 171
Theodectes 165
Theodorus 146, 146n., 147
Theogony, Hesiod's 227
'Theolus' 237
Theophrastus 13, 14, 48, 89, 121, 122, 127
Theorus 237
Thersites 171
Thesaurοchrysonicochrysidēs 212
Theseid 189
Theseus 189
Thesmophoriazusaē, Aristophanes' 238, 244, 252, 272, 273, 276, 278, 283
Thisby 237
'Thisne' 237
Thopas, Sir, Chaucer's *Tale of* 257
Thrasippus 152, 162
Timotheus 131, 170
Tiresias 291, 292
Titania 236, 242, 256
Toinette 238, 244, 265, 273, 274, 279
Tom Jones, Fielding's 207, 215, 216
Tongue 257
Topas, Sir 244, 275
Topica, Aristotle's 143, 143n.
Touchstone 248, 266, 268, 269
Towneley Secunda Pastorum 234
Trackers, Sophocles' 228
Tractate (*Tractatus Coslinianus*) 6, 8, 10-18, 23, 30, 36, 42, 44, 50, 55, 64, 69-71, 75, 82, 87, 89, 91, 92, 96, 118, 122, 138-140, 151, 177, 202, 211, 224-286, 289
Triballian 121, 251, 281, 283
Trinummus, Plautus' 190, 198
Trissotin 256, 259
Trolls 255
Troy 242
True History, Lucian's 245
Trygaeus 242, 245
Tucca 273
Turc, le Grand 256
Turkish 282

- Turks 253, 254, 265, 282
Twelfth Night, Shakespeare's 244, 268, 269, 275
 Twiller, Van 247, 276
Two Gentlemen of Verona, Shakespeare's 232, 238
 Tzetzes 36, 37, 37n., 51, 51n., 86, 90, 91, 231, 234, 240, 241, 244, 247, 259, 287-289
 Ulpian 281
Ulysses the False Messenger, see *Odyseus with the False Tidings*.
 Unjust Reason (Worser Reason) 50, 280
 Uranie 81
Urkunden Dramatischer Auf-führungen, Wilhelm's 22n.
 Usener 26n.
 Vahlen 5, 11, 11n., 133, 228n., 299
 Valère, in *L'Avare* 241
 Valère, in *Le Médecin Malgré Lui* 279
 Van Leeuwen 72
 Van Twiller 247, 276
 Varro 198
 Vaugelas 281
 Vaughan, Sir 273
 Verges 248, 252
Veterum Arte Poetica Quaestiones Selectae, De, Kayser's 11, 11n.
 Victorius 141n.
 Virgil 30, 187
Vita Aristophanis 23n.
 Volkmann 259
Vorträge und Aufsätze, Usener's 27
Voyage to Laputa, Swift's 231, 245
 Wachsmuth 116n.
 Walpurgisnacht 255
 Wandle 247
 Warner 49n.
Wasps, Aristophanes' 173, 231, 237, 240, 253, 255, 260, 262, 274, 278
Wasps, Roger's edition 253
Wasps, chorus of 253
 Watch, Second, in *Much Ado* 248
 Watson 92n.
 Welldon 62n., 117n., 120n., 134n., 144n., 160n., 162n., 165n.
 Welch 73
 Welsh 283
 Werner 1
When did Aristophanes Die? Kent's 22n.
 White 199
 Wilamowitz 22n.
 Wilhelm 22n.
 Windsor Park 254
 Wine-jar 241, 250
Wit and its Relation to the Unconscious, Freud's 77, 77n.
 Woman, First, in *Thesmophoriazusae* 278
 Wooden Horse 204, 242
 Wordsworth, C. 39
 Wordsworth, W. 30, 227
Works and Days, Hesiod's 227
 Wycherley 25
 Xanthias 196, 197, 207, 210, 240, 241, 245, 249, 269, 270, 274, 276, 277, 289
 Xenarchus 32, 100, 102, 151, 168, 228
 Xenocrates 126, 126n.
 Xenophanes 155, 219
 Xenophantus 165, 165n.
 Xerxes 144
 Zeno, of Elea 101
 Zeno, the Stoic 98
 Zenobius 157n., 159
 Zeus 235, 236, 241, 242, 250, 251, 260, 269, 270, 280, 288
 Zielinski 44, 45, 49, 49n., 55, 55n., 56, 58
Zwei Abhandlungen, Bernays' 10n.

